

THE
TRACT MAGAZINE,

AND

Christian Miscellany:

CONTAINING

VARIOUS PIECES OF PERMANENT INTEREST.

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AND
CHRISTIAN MISCELLANY.



A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

"I wish you a happy new year," was the salutation which met the various individuals of Mr. Mason's family, as they entered the breakfast-room on the morning of the first of January; and "the same to you," was always the response to this affectionate greeting.

"How universal is the desire to secure happiness for ourselves and for those we love," said Charles Mason; "it seems to be an instinct of the mind which sin has not impaired."

"No," his father answered, "sin has not destroyed the thirst for happiness, but has turned mankind away from the fountain

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of life where that thirst could be satisfied, and led them to hew out for themselves cisterns that can hold no water."

"After our conversation of last night,"* resumed Charles, "I do not think that any of us will be inclined to dispute that happiness is to be found only in true religion; but I have been thinking over the subject since, and should like to know what is this same happiness? In what does it consist?"

"This is a question, my son," said Mr. Mason, "to which you will, I think, receive a great variety of answers, each according to the constitution of his mind to whom you put it. Suppose you ask the opinion of our learned collegian here."

"By all means," replied Charles, turning to his brother. "Come, Henry, let us have your definition of the word."

"I will not offer you anything original," said Henry, "but you shall have one second-hand from Wessenberg. He says, 'The whole science of happiness is shut up in a single word, and this word is occupation. Everything depends upon knowing how to fill up the void of life.'"

"This is the same sentiment," observed his mother, "that an English writer has expressed in more homely terms. He declares that the proverb of 'too many irons in the fire' is all a mistake. You cannot have too many; he says, keep them all going, poker, tongs, and all."

"This sentiment," replied Mr. Mason, "contains truth, but not the whole truth."

"Then, papa, let us have your definition," said his daughter.

"You shall have the best I am acquainted with," he answered. "I would say that happiness is the result of the right action of the moral powers. This is very similar to what Henry has repeated, excepting the little word right, which makes a material difference in the meaning. When these powers are exercised in the service, and to the glory of Him who gave them, which you will all acknowledge is their right action, I am sure that happiness, so far as it may be enjoyed in this imperfect state, will be the result."

"Do not you think, my dear," said Mrs. Mason, "that even unconverted persons, who are not influenced by a desire to please God, when from natural amiability they do what is right, experience great enjoyment in doing it?"

"No doubt," he replied, "and this is one proof of the truth of my theory. It is well illustrated by a circumstance in the life of one whose powers of mind, and body also, were unceasingly and successfully exercised, till he was qualified to

* See "The Last Day of the Year," December number.

judge how far the realization of ambition's highest aspirations can confer happiness—Napoleon Bonaparte. He once visited a hospital which he had himself founded for the maintenance of the daughters of such of his officers as had fallen in battle. These poor fatherless girls gathered round him, and, with the warmth of heartfelt gratitude, thanked him for his goodness to them. He was so much affected, as is stated on indisputable authority, that he became quite overpowered, and bursting into tears, exclaimed to those who were with him, 'This is the happiest moment of my life.'

"It is," said Charles, "a striking testimony to the correctness of your definition. That little word right does make an essential difference in the meaning. The great conqueror, as it appears, found, from an act of benevolence and kindness to the unfortunate, the highest enjoyment he ever experienced."

"How happy then are those," observed Mrs. Mason, "who from their heart serve God, making all their occupations subservient to that end, and trying, whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, to do it to his glory."

"Indeed they are," her husband answered, "and I much fear that many Christians lose a great deal of the enjoyment which they might secure, even in this imperfect state, by the coldness of their love and the indolence of their services to Him who redeemed them with his precious blood. Oh, how they mistake who think that service a yoke of bondage. Truly the yoke is easy and the burden light, for it is the sweet and pleasant service of love; and when we bring the years that are spent in it to an end, we can look back on them without the useless sorrow and regret which must ever attend a retrospect of time wasted in worldly pursuits."

"Well," said Mrs. Mason, "we are, I think, all agreed as to what happiness consists in, and where it is to be found. We are also unanimous," she continued, with a smile, "in wishing for each other and ourselves that the year we are now commencing should be a happy one; shall we not then, in humble dependence upon Divine assistance, strive to make it so by spending it in the service of our God?"

"Mother," replied Charles, "I did not conceal from you and the other members of this dear circle last night, the feelings which were so suddenly and powerfully revived in my mind as to the uncertainty of this life, and the madness of making no preparation for another, by hearing the verse of Scripture which I had listened to as I stood beside the untimely grave of my friend in a far island of the Pacific.

Bitterly does my conscience testify that the lesson received there, and the resolutions formed, were too soon forgotten in the busy scenes that followed. Perhaps I made these resolutions too much in my own strength; but it is said that

‘The strongest plume in wisdom’s wing
Is memory of past folly.’

Then may I, and you all, my brothers and sisters, seek, as our dear mother says, in humble dependence upon Divine help, to spend this year so that it shall be conducive not only to present but to future happiness.”

“The Lord enable you to fulfil that resolution, my dear children,” answered his father; “and, I would add, begin to-day, for ‘ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away,’ James iv. 14. ‘The uncertainty of life is a fact universally acknowledged, and sometimes felt even by the most careless, when some startling event, such as that which Charles related to us yesterday evening, brings it home to the heart; but oh, how little are the generality of people influenced by this solemn and undeniable truth, since they go on living from day to day and from year to year as if this world were to be their dwelling place for ever; and if the still small voice of conscience do occasionally awaken thoughts about a ‘judgment to come,’ quieting it as Felix did when he said to Paul, ‘Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee,’ Acts xxiv. 25: the most important concern of man being put off to some future period, when death may, for aught we know, be at the very door! Truly, my children,

“’Tis a stern and startling thing to think
How often mortality stands on the brink
Of its grave, without any misgiving;
And yet in this slippery world of strife,
In this stir of human bustle so rife,
There are daily sounds to tell us that life
Is dying, and death is living.’”

“But, father,” inquired Henry, “when you speak of our devoting ourselves to the service of God, you surely do not mean that the business of life is to be disregarded, that we are all to turn preachers or missionaries.”

“Certainly not, my son. The profession and practice of Christianity may be maintained in every condition, as the apostle Paul intimates when he says to his converts, ‘Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called,’

1 Cor. vii. 20, and charges them to be 'not slothful in business,' Rom. xii. 11; but, as your mother remarked just now, those who truly love God, and wish to serve and glorify Him, will make all their occupations subservient to that end. As to all who are called to the knowledge and love of Christ turning preachers and missionaries, in one sense, I would say, they are bound to do so. By the consistency of our conduct with our profession—by manifesting on all occasions to those around us the meekness, forbearance, and love of the gospel, we should be recommending it in the most powerful manner to their acceptance, and ultimately 'they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation,' 1 Peter ii. 12.

"My children, I feel as if we had indeed commenced a happy new year. The Lord enable us to fulfil our right intentions, and to serve him in spirit and in truth. But let us never forget that even having done all, we are still to count ourselves but as unprofitable servants; and that were it possible to devote unceasingly every energy of mind and of body to him, it would be but a faint testimony of the gratitude and love which we owe to Him who first loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Let this wonderful, this blessed truth be present with every one of us through the portion of time we have now commenced, leading us to cry—

'Oh! to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be;
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it,
Seal it from thy courts above.'

E. F. G.

THE REWARD TICKET AND THE SHELL-WORKER.

A SMALL card, a Sunday-school ticket, was dropped by a child. Many persons pass, and it lies unheeded on the ground. It is presently noticed, however. A youth stops, and turns it over with the point of his stick, and reads it; and smiles sarcastically as he lifts his head again, and goes on his way.

Now, a grey-headed man perceives it. He is a merchant, he is hastening to an appointment; he expects to make money to-day by a good speculation. Nevertheless, he pauses and picks up the ticket, and reads the printed words. He starts as

if stung by a troublesome insect, throws down the offensive card, and hurries away more rapidly than before.

Again it attracts notice. A thoughtful-looking man bends, and takes it in his hand. He is about to put it in his pocket; but he does not. After a moment's reflection, he restores it to its former place; and, if closely watched, it will be seen that his lips are in silent motion as he resumes his course.

A handsome carriage was at the door of a large house. It had been some time waiting. At length the hall-door was opened, and a lady entered the carriage, and giving directions to the servant, was rapidly driven towards the town.

Mrs. A— was wealthy and worldly. She was fond of amusement and display. She loved the world, and the things of the world. She had many friends; but her friendships were those of the world. Many envied her her fortune and her enjoyments; but they did not know or believe how insufficient is wealth to procure heart-ease and peace. Not that Mrs. A— was more unhappy than many others of her own rank, position, and character; but her worldly enjoyments and pleasures had not filled her heart with satisfaction and peace.

Mrs. A— had business in the town that day, and also intended to make a round of morning calls. Being detained longer than she expected at the houses of her friends, she determined to alter her plan. The check-string was pulled. "As we are in the street, I will alight," she said to the footman, who ordered the carriage to be drawn up to the pavement. While descending the steps, the card attracted the lady's attention. She directed her servant to pick it up. He obeyed, and placed it in her hand.

It was only a Sunday-school ticket: Mrs. A— might have cast it away; the probability was that she would do so; but she did not. An hour or two later and Mrs. A— was on the road homewards, and when she re-entered her own door, the Sunday-school reward ticket was still in her hand.

The lady was alone. Had another been there, she would have hidden behind a veil of smiles the expression of thought and agitation which her countenance had assumed; but she was alone, and while she rested on her soft couch, she cast her eyes again on the small piece of card she yet held, and its motto, "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL? OR WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?"

These questions were not exactly new to Mrs. A—, that is,

she had heard them before. She remembered to have read them when she was a child. Perhaps she had read them since then; but as she saw them on that card they seemed to have a personal bearing and a pointed significance.

Strange that the printed ticket should have been there; that those words should be on it; that she should have noticed the card at all, as it lay neglected on her path; that she should have had the curiosity to seek a knowledge of what it contained! She wished she had let the card remain where it was; it had made her feel wretched.

"What shall it profit—?" The lady was angry with the silent accuser. Had there been a fire in the grate, she might probably have thrown it on to the flame. A desk was open, she put it into the desk, and locked it out of sight.

It was a most uncomfortable day; for the questions continually recurred to her mind; "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

There was an evening party, crowded with the votaries of fashion. Mrs. A— was there, envied and admired. If there were painful sensations on her mind, they were imperceptible to those around. Who so gay and happy as she? And who should be happy if she were dull, with wealth and all its appliances at her command? It was late when her carriage rolled away from the dispersing assembly; and Mrs. A— was again alone. Annoying and perplexing! Why could she not forget the words which had that day fastened, like a barbed arrow, in her mind? "What shall it profit?" A world gained!—a soul lost! What did it mean?

And why should such a one as Mrs. A— be troubled by such questions as these? She was rich—true: but she was not seeking to monopolize the world; she was satisfied with what she had. Even so; but this conviction would not leave her in quiet; "the whole world," if hers, would it outweigh her soul's value? She slept restlessly that night.

Among the arrivals at one of the fashionable watering-places on the coast was Mrs. A—. Change of air and scene had been prescribed. She was not exactly ill. Her physician declared her to be nervous; and nothing would be so likely to restore her tone of mind and body as the bracing influence of sea air, and travelling.

Many weeks had passed away since the sentence on that fugitive reward ticket had met her eye and arrested her

thoughts; and she had striven hard to banish the impression which it had produced; but she had striven in vain. Daily and nightly the question recurred to her mind with unabated sternness and severity: What shall it profit you, if you shall gain the whole world, and lose your own soul?

Of all the numerous visitors at that watering-place, none were more apparently absorbed in the chase of gratification than Mrs. A—. She plunged into the minor dissipations and childish follies, the means for which abound in such places as these. It was in vain; the secret tormentor followed her to the race-course, the theatre, and the midnight assembly; and at the card-table, the voice whispered to her heart, "What shall it profit?"—the gain of a world!—the loss of a soul!

There was a shop in a narrow street in that town; a small shop in which fancy articles were sold—delicate shell-work bouquets, grouped with extreme taste and beauty; these were the main staple of the stock in trade of the little establishment; and they were of home manufacture. The shop was kept by a widow; and a small back room was the workshop in which her two daughters wrought incessantly to supply the demand which their skill had created.

A mournful interest was attached to that widow by some who knew her history. She and her daughters had known more prosperous days; but the same stroke which bereaved them of a husband and father, reduced them to comparative poverty. Then they turned the art which had formerly been cultivated for amusement, into a means of support; and some degree of success had attended their efforts. But it was said that one of the daughters, the more skilful of the two, was slowly sinking in decline; and that the work of her thin, trembling fingers would, before another season, be over.

Strange, that selfish calculation should obtrude in circumstances such as these; but the knowledge of Clara's failing health enhanced the desire to be possessed of her superior handiwork, and increased the demand for the frail ornaments she manufactured.

It was on the evening of an autumn day that Mrs. A—'s carriage drew up at the widow's door; and that lady, entering the shop, was soon occupied in an examination of the specimens arranged on the counter for sale. They were very common-place, she thought; but on a shelf behind, carefully screened by a glass-shade, was a *chef d'œuvre* of artistic skill. Mrs. A— would willingly have paid down a reasonable price

for the beautiful manufacture, but it was not purchaseable; it had been made to order, and was but just completed; to-morrow it would be sent home.

"I will have one made also," said the customer; "and, if possible, more perfectly beautiful and unique."

The widow shook her head doubtfully and very mournfully.

"I fear to take another order at present," she said.

"Why, may I ask?" inquired Mrs. A—, impatiently.

"My elder daughter is very ill, madam," said the widow, falteringly; "and my younger can scarcely undertake so expensive an order; she has not her sister's skill, though her taste is good."

"I have heard that your daughter is unwell," said the customer, "and I am sorry for it; it must be a great trial to you; but is she so very ill that she cannot do anything now?"

"She still works," replied the mother; "she will work while she can; but I fear it cannot be for long;" and, unable longer to restrain her sorrows, she wept bitterly.

Mrs. A— attempted some common-place consolation; she hoped, she said, that the case was not so desperate; and reminded the widow that there had been sometimes extraordinary recoveries, even when physicians had despaired of life; and then she reverted to the order she was so desirous of having executed. "Your daughter is able to work, you say; she might as well work for me as for another."

Clara had other orders yet unexecuted, the mother said, which would take much time; but she would speak to her; or would the lady be so kind as to step into the back-room? Clara was there, and she would answer for herself.

Mrs. A— was not particularly fond of seeing sick people. She would willingly have excused herself from an interview with one who was said to be dying of consumption; but the door was already open, and there was no retreating.

Clara and her sister were both busily employed; and there was nothing in the looks of the invalid to alarm. A difficulty of breathing; a constant wasting away; a pallidness of the cheek, except when fever-flushed; an excessive languor of body, corrected and kept in subjection by constant and unfailing energy and activity of mind; these were the chief visible symptoms of the disease which had baffled medical skill. The visitor was re-assured when she looked—there was nothing alarming; at least, there was nothing repulsive there.

The customer's eagerness prevailed. If she would wait till earlier orders were disposed of, the sisters would gladly

try to meet her wishes. But it was uncertain, for Clara felt, she said, that her work for livelihood was nearly completed.

"Oh, you frighten yourself unnecessarily," said Mrs. A—, "it is a pity to let such gloomy thoughts enter the mind; you will soon be better."

"Gloomy thoughts! Do you mean the thoughts of dying?" Clara asked, with a peaceful smile.

"Yes, of dying. Such thoughts were very gloomy of course, they must be." So Mrs. A— declared, with a shudder.

"Not when the sting of death is removed," said the invalid, in a low voice, and a countenance lighted up with the peace which passeth understanding. Mrs. A— never forgot that voice and look; "and when we can say, 'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"I do not understand this," said the lady, coldly; "but it is a good thing you can think so calmly of dying, though I cannot see why you should think about it at all, just at present." And she rose and left the room.

The next day, Mrs. A— was again in the small parlour of the shell-worker. It was early in the day, and she had made her way thither on foot.

"I am not come to speak about these matters," she said, in reply to Clara's inquiring look, and pointing to the materials which strewed the table. "I am wretched; I have long, long been miserable. There was something you said yesterday that I do not understand; and yet, I feel that it has a meaning. Tell me what you mean by 'victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;' by the sting of death being removed; how is it you can think of dying without dread? I have heard of such words before now; but I have thought they were only words. Tell me how it can be." And she cast an appealing look on the young invalid, as she seated herself by her side.

"Have you never thought of these things before, madam?" Clara gently asked.

"Yes, sometimes, and lately much. I will tell you how it began; but I cannot describe to you how very, very wretched I have been. It was a small card which came accidentally into my hands—here it is." And she laid the reward ticket on the table.

"You are aware that these are the words of the Lord Jesus, and you know where they are to be found?" said Clara.

"Yes; and I have found them, and read them there, again and again; but lately I have not dared to open the Bible; it has only made me more miserable."

"Dear madam," said the invalid, "is not that because you will not submit to the Saviour? When he was on earth, he said to many who heard him, 'Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.' He says so now to those who read his gracious invitations, and reject them."

"I do not understand you. If you mean that I have rejected his invitations,—what are they, where are they?"

"It is not for me," said Clara, after a momentary pause, "who know so little myself, to presume to teach others; but, madam, has not the Saviour said, does he not say, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?' Dear madam," she added, with so much unaffected simplicity and earnestness, and sympathy, while her cheek was flushed and her eye lighted up with holy unction, that the familiarity of the address was lost, "I know that these words are true. I laboured and was heavy laden—oh, how heavy laden! I went to him, and I found rest. And this is why death is not terrible, nor the grave gloomy; and why I can speak of victory through Jesus Christ."

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It was very unaccountable, the gay visitors of that watering-place said, the strange interest which the fashionable Mrs. A— took in Clara, the shell-worker. Day after day she was known to enter the little shop, and passing into the back parlour, to sit talking with the young invalid. More astonished still were they when it was known that Mrs. A—'s carriage was placed at her disposal, and that on warm sunny days, with that lady by her side, the poor girl was taking short excursions into the country. Yet more extraordinary was it, that Mrs. A— was no longer to be met in parties and midnight assemblies. But when it was first whispered, and then loudly spoken, that Clara's religion—suitable for one in her circumstances, perhaps, but very proposterous in persons of fashion, who were not dying, as Clara was—had infected Mrs. A—, who shall describe the sensation it produced?

It mattered little. Roused, at length, to a sense of the transcendent value of the soul—her own soul, and to a just appreciation of a Saviour's love and mercy; conscience-smitten by the remembrance of her past neglect and folly; what signified the laugh of the careless, or the sneer of the profane?

Weeks passed away, the season was over, and the gay, dissipated watering-place became dull. Lodging-house keepers counted their gains, or bemoaned their disappointments, and prepared for the next year's campaign, while their temporary tenants were dispersed far and wide to their own homes. One remained, however; it was Mrs. A—. Her carriage no longer bore the light burden of the young invalid, for she was fast sinking; too feeble and fragile to bear exposure to the winter blasts. But by the side of her couch, the owner of the carriage was often to be found, listening to her words of love, and hope, and peace; and ministering to her wants.

A few more weeks, and Mrs. A— returned to her home. It was said that she had lost a friend; and by some it was discovered that this friend was none other than a poor work-girl, as they said, whom she had patronised. She was strongly altered, moreover. By a way that she knew not, she had been led to a knowledge of the Saviour: she had fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before her in the gospel: and what things had once been gain to her, she had learned joyfully to count but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus her Lord; by whom the world was crucified unto her, and she unto the world.

G. E. S.

HOME REVIEWS.

THE PELICAN ISLAND.

"How kind of Mr. L— to allow us the use of his library while he is away," said Emma; "I am delighted to think of the variety of books that we shall have to read for a long time."

"And I am pleased to think of the kind of books we shall have," replied her brother Richard. "I have heard that the selection is very good."

"That is an equivocal expression," observed their father, "its meaning depending much upon the taste of those who apply it. In so large a collection you would, my children, do well to be cautious what books you choose, and thus make the most of the privilege Mr. L— so kindly allows you."

"I am told there is a good deal of poetry there," said Anna, "and you would not object to our reading that, papa?"

"Certainly not," Mr. Travers replied; "it is a mental recreation which, I think, refines and improves both mind and feelings when judiciously indulged; otherwise it has an enervating and, in many ways, injurious tendency."

"But is it not wrong of the Christian to read any but sacred poetry?" inquired Emma.

"Not in my opinion," her father answered. "To me it seems that the believer may occasionally find a perfectly legitimate pleasure in poetry, that takes in a wide range of subjects, and appeals to every feeling of our nature not in itself sinful, employing the same scenery, imagery, and circumstances as other poetry, but, so to speak, on religious principles. Springing from a renewed mind, such poetry will indirectly introduce or delicately insinuate religious sentiments; and is, I think, the most useful kind for circulation among the mass of readers, who would not read, and, if they did, could not understand, what was strictly devotional."

"I think that strictly devotional poetry is not often good," observed Richard.

"How can you say so?" cried Emma. "The highest, holiest subjects; the—"

Her father interrupted her. "This is the very reason, my dear, why it is not often good, as I agree with Richard in thinking. The subjects are so sublime that very few have skill to handle without seeming to degrade them. It has been well remarked that there is more poetry in the mere facts of theology than in the finest excursions of the human imagination; and we feel that they are best expressed in the beautiful simplicity of Scripture language. In writing the kind of poetry I have been speaking of, this difficulty does not exist, consequently it is oftener good of its kind."

"Please, father, give us some instances," said Richard.

"They abound in the writings of my favourite Cowper," Mr. Travers replied, "with which you are all, I hope, familiar; at least every one is acquainted with the verses supposed to be spoken by Alexander Selkirk when on the desolate island, beginning 'I am monarch of all I survey,' and they will exemplify my meaning. This little poem is not professedly religious; the situation, sentiments, and feelings are such as the commonest reader can conceive to be his own, and enter at once into sympathy with. In the fourth stanza, when the mind of the reader has been, as it were, taken possession of, a religious sentiment is introduced, recommended with what may be called the picturesque of religion—'The sound of the church-going bell.' The subject is again revived, and with what beautiful effect, in the last four lines:—

"There's mercy in every place;
And mercy—encouraging thought
Gives e'en to affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot."

"You have pointed out a merit in this nice little poem, dear papa, which I never observed," said Emma. "I now perceive that it may be useful to a worldly-minded reader, by leading him unawares to think of the mercy of God."

"Yes, that attribute of the Divine character from whence spring all our hopes of forgiveness and eternal happiness, even 'the tender mercy of our God whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.' The mind of Cowper was so deeply imbued with Christian truth, that on whatever subject he wrote a gleam of it was now and then admitted; always tastefully, and with the happiest effect."

"But, papa," said Anna, "you must tell us of other poets whose works you would approve of our reading, that we may get them at Mr. L—'s library."

"I hope," said Richard, "that Lord Byron will be one."

"He will not," answered their father. "Of him, and of all others, who have perverted the talents given them by God, by trying to dishonour him in their use—of all who have written against religion, morality, or propriety, I would say, my dear children, have nothing to do with such. No—

'Let Byron, with untrembling hand,
Impetuous foot, and fiery brand,
Lit at the flames of hell,
Go down and search the human heart,
Till fiends from every corner start,
Their crimes and plagues to tell.'

But let not the disciples of Jesus listen to such strains. You ask me to mention some poets whose works I would recommend to young people. I will first name James Montgomery, of whose writings you have seen only a few short pieces. He has written some long ones, and they are in Cowper's style so far as that, though not on religious subjects, they are imbued with the spirit of gospel truth."

"Well, papa," said Richard, "suppose you give us a little review of them, so that we can form an idea of how we may like them before we begin."

"Delightful!" Anna exclaimed. "I am sure papa would make an excellent reviewer."

Mr. Travers smiled and shook his head. "I am rather doubtful on that subject, my dear. I believe there is not a more difficult department of literature. However, I will occasionally undertake it in your service, so far at least as to give you some notion of the books I would recommend. I will begin with Montgomery's 'Pelican Island.' The subject of

this poem was suggested by a description, in Flinders's voyage of one or two islands in a gulf on the coast of New Holland, which seemed to have been for ages in the undisturbed possession of pelicans. Not only were flocks of these enormous birds, both old and young, to be seen there, but the bones and skeletons of them were scattered everywhere."

"What a strange subject for a poem," observed Emma.

"It does seem rather a barren one," replied her father, "but poets have discursive imaginations. The narrative is supposed to be delivered by some being who witnesses the series of events, and then relates them. Since you have dubbed me reviewer, I would exercise the art of criticism, and say that by beginning this history so far back as when the world was in a chaotic state, I think the first canto is made very vague and fanciful. In the second we come to the formation of the Pelican Island, and though the description of this extraordinary process is poetical and beautiful, perhaps I can give you a better idea of it in simple prose. The foundation of this island, as of hundreds of others in the Pacific Ocean, is a coral reef, made entirely by insects of various sizes and shapes, the most common being in the shape of a star, with arms about six inches long; some are like snails, and others like lobsters; and they are of various colours. There, in ocean's depths, they toil, taught by instinct; building their dwellings and their sepulchres, and leaving a progeny to build new cells and tombs, till they have reared immense reefs of coral rocks to the surface of the water,

'Unconscious, not unworthy, instruments,
By which a hand invisible is rearing
A new creation in the secret deep.'

"How wonderful!" cried Emma. "Please, papa, go on."

"The imaginary narrator then describes the gradual formation of soil on this newly-made island, till

'Fountains through filtering sluices sallied forth,
And led fertility where'er they turned;
Green herbage graced their banks, resplendent flowers
Unlocked their treasures, and let flow their fragrance.'

Next, birds inhabited the newly-grown woods of the lonely isle; not the pelicans, who had withdrawn as fertilization advanced, but some who

'With melody untaught
Turned all the air to music within hearing.'

At last man appears, and a powerful sketch is given of him

in his savage state; beings with immortal souls living like brutes, and perishing without knowledge—perishing

‘As though they were but things of dust and ashes,
With still-born souls that never could be quickened,
Till death brought immortality to light,
And from the darkness of their earthly prison
Placed them at once before the bar of God.’

The interest of the reader is now much engaged by the character of a veteran chief, the glory of his tribe, whose natural superiority of mind was, in his decline of life, exercised in profound thought. He had investigated the works of God around him, and learned many things ‘hid from uninquiring ignorance.’ He turned with disgust from the idols of his countrymen, pitying the fatuity of those who bowed before such things. It was the great Creator of all that he panted to know; and he felt there was that within himself which proved that he was an immortal being—

‘That man himself was for this world too mighty,
Possessing powers which could not ripen here,
But asked infinity to bring them forth.’

The history of this poor heathen’s mind, while he strove by searching to find out God, is beautifully told. The last scene is peculiarly affecting. The old chieftain walked forth one evening, holding by the hand his little grandson, the only stay of his bereaved affections, he having outlived all his other relatives. While the child played about a fair valley, amusing himself by gathering flowers to twine

‘A garland for the old grey hairs, whose locks
Were lovelier in his sight than all the blooms
On which the bees and butterflies were feasting,’

the grandfather stood on a rock contemplating the scene, till his heart was lifted up to the great Maker of it all. He fell on his knees, pouring forth a fervent prayer that God would reveal himself to his soul. Its concluding words were—

‘Oh that I may love thee!
For if Thou art, Thou must be good; Oh! hear,
And let me know Thou hearest!’

These words were, in low sweet accents, repeated from beneath the crag where he knelt. He looked—it was the child, also kneeling, doing what his grandfather did, and repeating what he said. The old man’s heart leaped at the sight—

‘While joy unspeakable and full of glory
Broke through the pagan darkness of his soul.’

He went to the child, took him in his arms, exclaiming, ‘My

son, there is a God.' 'Oh that I may love Thee, for if Thou art, Thou must be good!' murmured the child. The chief with tears exclaimed—

'He is! He is! and we will love Him too!

Yea, and be like Him,—good, for He is good!'

He then fervently prayed that though he might not live to learn God better, the full knowledge of that great Being might yet be revealed to his child; and also to his nation, who on hearing it, he said, would worship at the sound.

'He died that night; his grandson lived to see
The patriarch's prayer and prophecy fulfilled.'

"Beautiful!" exclaimed all the young people. "We must get the book at once."

"I wonder," said Emma, "if any uninstructed heathen has ever attained a knowledge of God so far as this poor old chief is supposed to have done."

"How delightful to carry the good tidings of the gospel to such, if such there be," Richard exclaimed.

"Indeed it would," said Mr. Travers, "but let us recollect that however dubious the existence of such may be, there are thousands of our fellow creatures in a more pitiable condition, wholly alienated from God, and worshippers of devils according to the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. x. 20. If we cannot go to those, we may do something towards sending them that blessed book which is able, with the teaching of God's Holy Spirit, to make them wise unto salvation."

"I think we shall be more anxious than ever to forward missions when we have read the Pelican Island," said Anna.

"I hope so, my child, and work hard to help those

Who join the bands that left their home
Amidst barbarian hordes to roam,
Who land and ocean cross'd,
Led by a loadstar, mark'd on high
By faith's unseen, all-seeing eye—
'To seek and save the lost.'

G—.

TRUST IN THE LORD.

BY OLD HUMPHREY.

If you want anything worth having, the way to obtain it is to trust in the Lord. If you cannot get it in this way, you will not get it in any other. God denies to those who trust in him nothing that is for their good. Make yourself easy, then, for

if you truly trust in him all will be well. What he gives you will be in love, and what he withholds will be in wisdom.

Do you want health? Trust in the Lord, for none but he has it in his power to give it. The freshest breeze, the sunniest sky, the mildest clime, and the medicine of the most skilful physician, will all be in vain to bestow, or preserve health without God's blessing. Trust and "fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones," Prov. iii. 7, 8.

Trust in the Lord; his power alone bestows
On pallid cheeks the colour of the rose.

Do you want riches? You must go where they are to be had. Now, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." The gold and the silver are his, and the cattle on a thousand hills. To him, then, you must apply. Trust in the Lord, and if riches will add to your happiness on earth, without hindering you on your way to heaven, rich you shall be.

Trust in the Lord, his righteous ways uphold,
And he will give thee better gifts than gold.

Do you want reputation? Trust in the Lord, and ask him to enable you to deserve it. Reputation is very hard to get, and very easy to lose. Envy, hatred, malice, and slander's tongue may, in an unlooked for moment, deprive you of it unless God be your protector. If he is your friend you are secure.

Trust in the Lord, and he will guard thy fame,
And in the book of life inscribe thy name.

Do you want wisdom? Trust in the Lord, and put up your petition to him. Some travel to get wisdom. Some read books to get wisdom, and some listen to the learned to get wisdom, but "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Fear him, then, love him, obey him, trust him, and praise him. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given to him," Jas. i. 5.

Trust in the Lord, for he can make us wise
As angels, and prepare us for the skies.

Do you want peace? Trust in the Lord, for unless he bestows it, you will never have it. It is not to be had for love or money, and no one can beg, borrow, or steal it. "There is no peace to the wicked." God is its only giver, and from him it must come, if it comes at all. "Let your requests be made known unto God: and the peace of God,

which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," Phil. iv. 6, 7.

Trust in the Lord, and care shall ne'er confound thee,
But thou shalt be at peace with trouble round thee.

Do you want a guide through the world? Trust in the Lord, for none other can you safely trust. Others, when you least expect it, will fail, or deceive you. Some are ignorant, some ungodly, some unjust, and some false in all things; but God is wise, and holy, and just, and true; trust then in him, and "the Lord shall guide thee continually," Isa. lviii. 11.

Trust in the Lord, and he in truth and love
Shall guide thee to the golden gates above.

Do you want a bright prospect of eternity—a glance of the mansions of the blest? Trust in the Lord, and he will unfold to you things wondrous to behold—things hidden from the eyes of those who fear not God. He can give you a faith that shall sharpen your eye-sight, and increase your love. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1.

Trust in the Lord, and thou by faith shalt see
The heaven of glory that's prepared for thee.

Whether you want health, wealth, reputation, wisdom, or peace, a guide through this world and a bright prospect of a better, trust in the Lord, and, if for your good, you shall have them all.

THE LITTLE HOME MISSIONARY.

In a small village on the eastern coast of Ireland, lived, a few years since, a family of the name of Cullin, consisting of a father, mother, and two children. John Cullin had been brought up in the tenets of the Roman Catholic religion; he was, however, indifferent to any religion, and did not mind marrying a Protestant. Such intermarriages are common in Ireland; and it is not improbable that in some quarters they may be encouraged, as a means of drawing over "converts," as they are called, to the Roman Catholic faith; the Protestant being generally the one who is led to forsake his or her former profession, in compliance with the wishes of the other. In John Cullin's case, however, this result did not take place. He never interfered with his wife on the subject of religion; and though it may be inferred from the union she formed, that she had no enlightened views of the difference between her husband's creed and her own, she continued to possess the ad-

vantage of not only having and reading the Bible, but also of occasionally hearing its sacred truths explained and enforced.

Of several children born to John and Betsy Cullin, during a period of sixteen years, two only survived; the eldest, Maurice, who followed his father's occupation, that of a sailor, and Janet the youngest but one. Between this brother and sister there subsisted a very strong attachment, probably strengthened by the recollection that they alone were left; and it may be that on the part of Maurice, who was a fine, generous, kind-hearted lad, it acquired additional strength from his observing the extreme delicacy of Janet, which excited constant fears that she too would before long lie down in the same resting place with the little ones who were gone before. It was the delight of Maurice, so soon as his labours on board the trading vessel in which he and his father were employed, began to receive a little remuneration beyond the supply of his daily wants, to bring to his sister some pretty present from "that fine country over the way," as he used to describe England.

If Maurice thus showed his attachment to his little sister, she on her part was not backward to give tokens that it was sincerely returned. When she was but seven years old she undertook the charge of her young sailor's wardrobe. It was not very extensive certainly, but such as it was, it was always neat and in order; not a button wanted in his Sunday jacket, or in the pure white linen that accompanied it; not a thread amiss in any part of the dress that lay ready for his use the moment of his return. There was one thing, however, which Janet did for Maurice of which no one knew anything but herself and her mother; she prayed for him.

In the town of Ballivourne, not far from where the Cullins' lived, a meeting for prayer and preaching the gospel was held at stated times, by several pious ministers, who came there in turn for the purpose, from other parts of Ireland. At these meetings not only were the Scriptures expounded, and prayer offered up, but many interesting details were frequently given of what God was doing both in Ireland and in foreign lands; and how he was blessing the labours of his servants, in trying to bring sinners to Christ. Janet was a little more than seven years old when her mother took her one evening to the meeting to hear Mr. L— (a minister whom she had formerly known) give an account of some mission schools in India. The attention of Janet was completely arrested; and she sat with fixed eyes gazing on the speaker, until his attention

was in turn drawn to her, and when the meeting was concluded he came up to where she sat, and recognising her mother, made some inquiries respecting herself and her family.

It was many years since they had met, and time and affliction had wrought great changes in Betsy's appearance, but Mr. L— was pleased to find that these were accompanied by very gratifying changes in her mind. Her sorrows had driven her to her Bible, and she was feeling her way, amidst much darkness and with very little assistance, to the binder up of the broken-hearted. While her husband was at home a sinful timidity prevented her attendance at the meeting, and she had no other means of grace near at hand. She had therefore been shut up to her Bible; but in teaching Janet to read this only book which she possessed, she found an unexpected assistant in her spiritual studies. The simple heart of the child readily, and as it were intuitively, grasped at truths which the pre-occupied mind of the mother was unable to comprehend, until the little hand lifted the veil, and showed her the treasure that lay beneath it. "She helps me understand many a precious word, sir," said Betsy in reply to an inquiry of Mr. L— whether Janet could read the Bible. "I taught her the letter, and she teaches me the spirit. I'd be happy if John and Maurice would only read it with us."

"Did you ever try to induce them?" inquired Mr. L—.

"No, sir, he never interfered with my religion, and somehow," answered Betsy, hesitating, "I'd be loth to interfere with his."

"Well, I don't ask you to interfere with his, otherwise than by telling him that God's word is a message to his soul as well as to yours. If the Bible interferes with his religion, his religion must be wrong you know."

"I do know it, sir," said the poor woman, her eyes filling with tears; "he's been a good husband to me, or I'd say 'tis little thoughtless girls know of the sorrow of her that strives to follow the Lord, but whose husband is wandering still."

"Well, don't be cast down," said Mr. L—, kindly laying his hand on the head of Janet; "who can tell what this little home missionary may do? and then, you know, prayer is a mighty thing. 'It moves the hand that moves the world.' You must pray for the husband and the son, for the father and the brother, you must both pray." Mr. L— took a small Bible from his pocket, which he presented to Janet, a hymn-book which he gave to Betsy, and having to leave Ballivourne early the next morning he bade them farewell.

A year passed away, and Mr. L— came again to hold a meeting at Ballivourne. When he entered the room, his first thought was of Janet and her mother, but he looked round for them in vain : at last when the meeting was over, and he turned to speak to some one near, he observed Betsy Cullin standing just within the door-way, and evidently waiting for him. As soon as he could free himself from the kind hands and warm hearts that surrounded him, he joined her, gave her an affectionate greeting, and inquired with much interest for his little friend Janet.

"Janet is very ill, sir," answered her mother sorrowfully ; "we'll not keep her long, but she's only going home. Could you see her, sir? She'd be so happy."

"And I shall be very happy to gratify her," replied Mr. L—; "but it grieves me to hear she is so ill; surely you don't mean to say there is no hope?"

"Oh, there is none, sir, there is none," cried Betsy, bursting into tears; "and if there was, what would it be to her own hope, her hope of being soon with her Saviour? I'm a sinful woman to cry. Sir, she's been a 'little missionary' since, and has money to give you for sending the gospel to the heathen, and some more for giving it to the poor Irish. And she's spoken to her father and to Maurice, sir, and they've listened, and though they don't read the Bible yet, I've faith to believe they will: her death will do it, I'm sure it will." The poor woman sobbed bitterly, as, leaning on the arm of the sympathizing missionary, they wended their way through the darkness of the night to her neat little cottage.

Janet was indeed very ill, and she was suffering much, but she looked peaceful and happy. "You are very ill, Janet," said Mr. L—. "I am, sir." "Are you very anxious to live, Janet?" "Only to know that father and Maurice will come too, sir." "Then you're not afraid to die, Janet?" "Oh no, sir," she said, with a smile that seemed to say "How could I?" By degrees and by seemingly casual observations and inquiries, Mr. L— drew from the dying child "a reason of the hope that was in her," and was satisfied it was one that would never make her ashamed. Before he left her she asked him to pray. "Is there anything in particular you wish me to ask for, Janet?" he inquired. She was then in severe pain of body, and he thought she might perhaps ask for some abatement of her physical sufferings. "Pray, sir," she answered, struggling for breath, "that Maurice may be converted, and father," she added, "and that I may live to see them again, sir, Maurice

especially:" not a thought of her own sufferings, all was for the souls of others.

When Mr. L— had prayed, Janet gave the money she had earned for missionary purposes into his hands, and he promised it should be applied as she desired. "'Tis very little, sir," she said, "but I like to think it may do somebody good when I'm gone; good-bye, sir, I'll not see you again till you come to heaven: as the hymn says, 'Oh that will be joyful.'"

Several years went by after this, during which time the labours of Mr. L— lay in a distant part of Ireland, and though he never forgot the interesting circumstances connected with the family of the Cullins, the constant changes of scene and society into which he was thrown had somewhat dimmed their outward image on his memory. He was assisting at a missionary meeting in a small seaport town in the province of Munster, when he observed a young man in a sailor's dress enter the place of meeting, and after seating himself quietly in an obscure corner glance up at the platform. Their eyes met, and Mr. L— observed a flush of pleasure on the young man's countenance, and an involuntary movement as if he would have risen from his seat and made towards him. Several times while the meeting was being held he found the young man's eyes still intently fixed on him; but as it drew to a close he disappeared. He was not gone, however. As Mr. L— descended from the platform he saw confronting him his unknown friend. With eagerness in his face, yet evidently afraid of appearing intrusive before so many, he held back, until Mr. L—, pitying his confusion, approached him, and he found courage to speak.

"You don't remember me, sir, I suppose?"

"Well, my friend," said Mr. L—, "I cannot call your name to mind; yet I have a dim recollection of having seen you before."

"Do you remember Ballivourne, sir, and little Janet Cullin?"

"I do," answered Mr. L—, eagerly; "I never can forget them, and you are Janet's brother?"

"I'm Maurice, sir,"

"And Janet's gone?"

"Yes, sir, she's gone to heaven."

"Can you tell me how long she remained after I saw her?"

"Just three weeks, sir. I was out you know, sir, and just twenty days after you left I came home, and the next day she went away. You know, sir, you prayed that she might live to see

me again, and so she did. Father had to stay ill at Newport on the other side, but I *should* come home, for you and she had prayed for it. She wanted to give me her last word, and to give me this;" and Maurice drew from the breast-pocket of his jacket a small Bible which Mr. L— immediately recognised.

"Well," said Mr. L—, glancing inquiringly from the book to the young man's face, and then back again to the book.

"I read it, sir, to please her, but I found more in it than I looked for; and I hope"—he paused and hung down his head.

"And I hope all's right," added Mr. L— encouragingly.

"I hope so, sir; I think I've got the right anchor; I know all's right with the anchor that's 'sure and stedfast.'"

"Thank God!" cried Mr. L—.

"Amen, sir."

"And your father and mother, how are they?"

"There's only my father now, sir."

"Indeed! Is your poor mother gone too?"

"Yes, sir, she went after Janet, she couldn't stay, she said; I wonder any of us did;" and the rough hand was brushed hastily across his eyelids.

"Well, and your father, how is it with him?"

"He took to reading my mother's Bible, sir, and I believe he's on the right tack. He never cared much for the other; but one may know the wrong harbour without running into the right one: but he's for the same haven I believe, sir. He was nigh swamped when no one was left but me, but now he holds up his head above the waters and sings

'There all the ship's company meet
Who sailed with their Saviour beneath;
With shoutings each other they greet,
And triumph o'er sorrow and death.'

Maurice stopped, but Mr. L— concluded the stanza—

"The voyage of life's at an end,
The mortal affliction is past,
The age that in heaven they spend
For ever and ever shall last."

"Thank God for little home missionaries!" exclaimed Mr. L— fervently, as, putting his arm within that of Maurice, he passed out of the place of meeting, forgetting everything but the interest of the simple details to which he had been listening.

M. B. T.

THE TWO INTERVIEWS.

A REMINISCENCE OF OLD HUMPHREY.

MANY persons have met Old Humphrey as an author, who have never seen his person, and many who know him only by his writings have felt an attachment to him, being persuaded that he was a truly lovable old gentleman. Those who have had the additional privilege of personal acquaintance with him can vouch that such was indeed the case ; and that he was not, as Mrs. Hannah More says, "merely good on paper, which is a very easy thing," but that he was a good man, with a heart overflowing with goodnature and kindly feeling, ever receiving happiness from surrounding objects and scenes, and imparting it to those around him.

I cannot boast of a long intimacy with him, or tell of frequent conversations or delightful walks ; I had but two interviews with our honoured friend. A little account of these, and a brief contrast of their varying circumstances, may be interesting, now this dear old man (who has cheered and gladdened so many) is gone from us.

On a beautiful day in June, about seven years since, I was invited to be present at the breaking up of a school party. Old Humphrey was present : we met, and soon felt at home in each other's society. After listening awhile to the music and singing of the happy party (which seemed much to gladden the good man's heart), as if by mutual consent we strolled away from the merry group into a quiet garden, and had a long conversation on various topics. I felt much delighted to find him to be just what I could have wished him to be from his writings. We parted, and met no more until a few days ago. The circumstances of that meeting I will now relate.

On visiting a well-known watering-place, to spend a few days with an esteemed friend, I was informed by her that Mr. Mogridge, commonly known as "Old Humphrey," was staying there in a very ill state of health, and that it was feared he would not long survive. He had been out twice for a ride with my friend, and had enjoyed the scenery beyond what might have been expected from the state of his health, but now he was unable to leave his room ; we visited him, but he was too ill to be seen. I called a day or two after, he was yet worse. The next day, November 2, I went to inquire, and was introduced to his chamber ; he was evidently sinking fast, the restlessness of death was upon him. Amidst gentle moans, expressive of agony arising from great difficulty of breathing,

we could distinguish the words "Lord," "mercy." I repeated to him some passages of Scripture, and went to prayer. From his manner we supposed that he entered into the petitions offered, but he had nearly done with prayer, and within half an hour after, as if dropping into a peaceful slumber, his gentle and sanctified spirit passed away without our even noticing the last sigh.

I shall not attempt to describe his character, or to record his Christian behaviour and hopeful sayings during his last illness. Others, better qualified by longer and more intimate acquaintance, may do that; but having described the closing scene, I will just refer to some reflections which arose in my mind during, and immediately after, the last moments of this Christian writer.

As I sat at the foot of the bed amidst the stillness of the dying chamber, expecting every minute that his ransomed spirit would leave its worn-out tent; as I gazed on his strongly marked, placid, yet attenuated features, at his late healthy frame, reduced to a skeleton by disease, varied thoughts and emotions passed through the heart. There lay the hand calm on his breast, which had so often wielded the pen by which so many had been instructed, pleased, encouraged, and profited. That hand was still now; it would write no more. What a mercy, I thought, is it that Divine grace took possession of that heart, sanctified that intellect, and employed that hand. Had the talent with which he was endued been devoted to the service of sin, had he tried to act the buffoon, to turn truth itself into ridicule, and make it his life's business to teach people to laugh; and had he succeeded to his heart's desire, amused the multitude, enriched himself, and left volumes of wit and humour behind him—how dreadful would it be to think of all this now, and while looking upon him as a dying man! Surely this is a serious work which is now doing. Death is a solemn thing; yes, and life is a solemn thing also, and so it appears as viewed from the dying hour. I blessed God, who had thus enabled him to consecrate his peculiar talents to the best of Masters, and to endeavour to be ever teaching truth, and alluring souls to glory by the paths of pleasantness.

Again, I thought, this good man will live still when he is dead. And so, a few moments after his departure, we who witnessed the scene knelt around the breathless clay, so calm and placid in death, and gave God thanks for all his grace and goodness toward the departed, implored consolation and strength for the bereaved widow, and intreated that all pre-

sent might be enabled to live nearer to God and more for his glory. I felt the value of the Saviour's words, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." The active spirit was now emancipated, and entered on an eternity of sinless service; and Divine testimony assured us that the deserted tenement would, when the Lord himself should "descend with a shout," "be fashioned like unto his glorious body." I rejoiced also that the truth of God would live and exert a beneficial influence, whatever instruments passed away; and that the works of him who now rested from his labours would yet be blessed. Let all God's saints, while life lasts and opportunity offers, seek to sow truth broad-cast. Our dear old friend wrote some of his little telling papers amidst pain and weakness, only a few days before his death. His labour and his life ended very near together.

On leaving the spot where I had witnessed this solemn scene, as I walked slowly along, my thoughts contrasted the two interviews to which I have referred. It appeared singular that as we met only twice, our meeting should be under such different circumstances: the one with life and joy all around us, the other amidst death and sorrow. And yet "the house of mourning" was the best. The end of the thing was better than the beginning—was fraught with instruction, more full of beauty. I had been privileged to see the end of a useful life; favoured to see a good man, respected and useful, one who had enjoyed religion and adorned it, who had borne a painful illness with Christian patience and cheerfulness, die clinging to mercy. How precious did that text appear, "The Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." I wished to whisper it to the dying saint, but he was then incapable of hearing. I trust the Comforter was near to glorify the Saviour, and to reveal Divine mercy in all its plenitude, and I thought that some such inward realizations produced the very pleasant appearance of his countenance a few minutes before he slept in Jesus. Surely this was the last scene! The end of this upright man was peace.

Dear reader, if you do not love the Saviour, these two interviews suggest one parting thought for you. Under what different circumstances may the same persons meet who only meet twice. You, for instance, may meet a minister of the gospel once in the house of God, and the next time at the bar of God. "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." Trifle not when truth gives you an interview. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of

salvation." Embrace the message of salvation, and Christ shall be your friend on the day of judgment, and throughout eternity.

J. C.

THE OLD AND THE NEW YEAR.

Old Year, farewell ! It grieves my heart
To feel we now so soon must part.
Amid the changing scenes of earth,
Where sorrow wept, or cheerful mirth
Engaged the hour, I've walked with thee,
And shared thy blessed sympathy.
At home, abroad, with friends new found,
Or those to whom I've long been bound,
I've travelled side by side with thee,
And now to part is grief to me.

Farewell ! thou goest to yield thy place
To one who comes with smiling face,
And many promises to be
A better friend than thou to me ;
To bear me onward to the goal
With lighter step and happier soul.
Well doth he promise ; but to win
A crown of life, and free from sin,
The resting-place of saints secure,
Oh ! who but Christ can make that sure ?

Then to his cross, in-coming Year,
Let every moment bear me near,
And nearer still ; thus wilt thou be
The friend thou promisest to me.
Farewell, Old Year ! we ne'er shall meet
In market thronged or crowded street ;
But we shall meet before the throne,
Where all the deeds mankind have done,
Proclaimed and judged, shall find award
From Christ, the omniscient living Lord.

New Year, thy proffered hand I take,
With thee my pilgrimage to make ;
Or, ere thy hasty months be fled,
Perchance to slumber with the dead.
Whate'er my future lot may be,
Which thou canst not reveal to me,
To Him who rules o'er earth and sky
Cheerful I yield my destiny.
May He my footsteps here attend,
And crown me at my journey's end.



WELSH FUNERALS.

THERE are few things in which the distinctive customs of a people are more observable than in their funerals. This is peculiarly the case in the principality of Wales. In the coast-towns, where intercourse with English and foreign visitors and residents, and the transactions of business have made inroads on the language, many of the national peculiarities have disappeared, and with them a portion of that which belongs to their funeral observances. In these, however, national customs are likely to linger somewhat longer than in other things, identified as they are with the warmest feelings of family affection.

A Welsh funeral, in the proper sense of the term, is "public"—no one is invited, but every one expected. Nearly an hour before the time of the funeral leaving the house, groups of people of both sexes, decently attired, and generally with a portion of mourning habiliments, may be seen gathering in front of the house. Such as have been most intimate with the family enter it.* By the time the procession moves, a great number of attendants will have accumulated, varying from fifty to two or three hundred, according to the extent of family connexion or the estimation in which the deceased was held. The greater part of these usually precede the coffin, which is frequently without a pall, and sometimes on a bier. This is followed by the immediate relatives and their more intimate friends.

In a recent instance of the funeral of a minister who had been for many years a faithful and successful servant of Christ, after the singing of a funeral dirge before his house, the body was preceded by nearly a hundred ministers, in the usual mourning dress, and followed by many hundreds of his sorrowing congregation and fellow townsmen. The whole was headed by the mayor of the town, with about fifty respectable inhabitants, who formed a double line, through which the procession passed into the building where for twenty years the voice of the deceased had proclaimed the tidings of salvation, and into which hundreds were unable to gain admission, though many thousands gazed on the sad spectacle with profound sympathy.

The interior of the spacious edifice was crowded to suffocation, and as one after another of the brethren of the deceased expatiated on his valued services, suddenly closed in the midst of a vigorous and most affectionate ministry, the sobs of the audience testified their deep and heartfelt love to him for the truth's sake. A vast throng attended his remains from thence to their resting place in the ground adjoining, where, in both languages, addresses were delivered, pointing with hope to the "crown of glory which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give at that day" to his faithful servants, and solemnly admonishing those who had heard his voice in vain that they would meet him at the bar of God, where the teacher and the taught must alike yield up their account; the one of the sacred trust reposed in him, and the others of the attention paid to the message of God through his servant.

Long will that day be remembered among the thousands of one of the most populous and thriving seaports in the principality, where many to whom his name and his labours had

been alike unknown were on that day awakened from the feverish dream of life to witness a scene which gave attestation to the power of true religion and a faithful ministry.

In the more rural districts singing is a not unfrequent accompaniment of a funeral procession, and with peculiarly solemn and impressive effect, the deficiency in artistic grace being amply compensated by the melting pathos of the Welsh airs, in the minor key, totally differing from the strains of English psalmody.

There is little of studied control over the feelings which sometimes, in the case of female mourners, break out into audible expressions as the procession passes along, and is often at the grave utterly uncontrollable. A deeply affecting scene of this nature passed under the notice of the writer some years ago, when on a visit to a remote part of the principality.

The scenery was of singular beauty, the churchyard being situated on the summit of a precipitous hill, clothed with rich verdure, and commanding an extensive prospect of country, the theme of one of the sweetest poems of the last century. A fine river wound its picturesque course through rich meadows, bearing on its silvery bosom numbers of little fishing coracles of wicker-work, covered with tar-cloth, which were worked with paddles by one, or at most, two individuals. The venerable white-washed church, small and rude in structure, with its bell-ropes hanging outside down the wall of the little turret, was embosomed in clusters of yew trees, gnarled in the most fantastic shapes, and bending beneath the weight of centuries of growth. A large proportion of the graves formed raised beds of flowers, kept up by the hand of affection.

Whilst enjoying the quiet luxury of this scene, and watching the rays of a rich evening sun on the tops of the distant mountains, and the water, reflecting the fine tints of foliage from the nearer hills, I was aroused by the sight of an unusual number of people, of both sexes, accompanying the funeral of two young lads, each of whom was borne on a bier to his last resting place. The coffin having been lowered into the grave, a heart-rending scene presented itself; the mother of the boys, leaning on a bier, which was set up against a grave-stone, gave vent to the agony of her grief. Another woman, scarcely less distressed, was trying to console her: a little further off were two sisters of the deceased, folded in each other's arms, weeping bitterly. There were no noisy demonstrations of grief, but the breaking forth of bitter and intense sorrow now and then interrupted the voice of the minister, as

he read, in melting tones, the Welsh version of the burial service. All whose sorrow did not prevent, seemed deeply attentive as the tears stood in their eyes. After the service had closed the clergyman turned away from the grave, and in a most tender and sympathetic manner approached the disconsolate mother, and then the sisters, and taking the different members of the family affectionately by the hand, addressed to each of them words of consolation in their native tongue. The greater part of the mourners remained upwards of half an hour on the ground after the conclusion of the funeral service, talking, in groups, on the sad event which had brought them together.

I think it was as much sympathy as curiosity that led me to follow the clergyman into the church, and while inspecting a tablet, to remark on the affecting scene which had passed. "Oh yes, sir," he replied, "there were two boys laid in that grave of the ages of eleven and thirteen, who both died, the victims of a malignant fever, in one day. It is a great blow to their poor father and mother, but they have one great alleviation of their grief; they 'sorrow not as those that have no hope.' They were good little boys, and gave us every reason to hope that they have slept in Jesus." The tender simplicity and earnestness with which this excellent pastor spoke of these lambs of his flock, now gathered to the heavenly fold, deeply interested me.

I had visited this spot to enjoy the proverbial beauties of its scenery; but these, rich and varied as they were, yielded to the scene just witnessed, in their power to affect the heart and to direct its aspirations to its heavenly Father. Some years have elapsed since this occurrence, but it will never cease to be remembered by the writer as one of those manifestations of the "beauties of holiness" which will ever-and-anon spring up to refresh and chasten the spirit.

What but the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, joined with the hope that these beloved children were amongst his willing and obedient followers, could have yielded rational consolation at this trying hour? It was once the writer's lot to condole with a bereaved husband, who knew no better source of consolation for the loss of one young and intensely beloved, than the necessity of submitting to an unavoidable fate. The thought of a future state appeared not to have formed a part of his calculations. What a contrast between this sullen acquiescence and the beautiful sentiment of the psalmist, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou

didst it ;" or the high faith of the patriarch, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Some, with thoughts of an eternal world, rest their hope concerning themselves or their friends on the blamelessness of their lives, or on the amount of suffering of which they have been the subjects in the present life. Vain, delusive hopes ! It is only the belief that "Christ both died and rose again," in its aspect on such as "sleep in Jesus," that affords true and legitimate consolation at such a time. And how shall they sleep in Jesus who have not lived to him ? All the scenes of picturesque and pensive beauty that cluster round the grave are but the merest accessories to the grand features of this event. All these, accompanied by every sentimental device that affection can bring to their aid, may be present when the tomb is only an awful gulf—the closing on a life of indifference, if not alienation from God, and the portal of an abyss without a bottom, and of sorrows that have no promise of relief. But with faith in the blood of the atonement and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the desert, the ocean, or the forsaken battle-field might be our resting place, and all the great elements of peace and hope should gather around our remains, and cheer the agonized minds of mourning friends, who would fain have closed our eyes and administered to our dying wants.

It is melancholy to reflect on the ignorance, indifference, and even coarse jesting that are associated with death and its memorials. The impenetrable darkness and profound secrecy of the grave are not sufficient to preserve it from profanation ; and it would seem as if folly, driven from the abodes of the living by the growing intelligence of the times, takes refuge, like the lunatic, among the tombs, and meets us, at every turn, in the mockery of uncouth and ludicrous epitaphs, whose teaching opposes that of the gospel, and whose flatteries of the dead serve only to deceive the living. Few and far between are the "pious texts" that teach us "how to die."

Reader, what is your hope ? Is your prayer "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his ?" Remember that this was the wish of a man who does not appear ever to have realized it. Instead of the "death of the righteous," the "wages of iniquity" were his. It is not a wish for the advantages of the godly, without regard to their relation to Christ, that will ever avail us. Give, then, your heart wholly to God. If young—very young, let the example

of these children, whose personal piety and oneness with Christ (not their childhood) was the ground of hope, lead you to listen to the voice that proclaims "They that seek me early shall find me."

A. G. F.

THE TWO EXTREMES.

MR. BENSON was an old gentleman who resided in a village adjoining the demesne of a nobleman, to which he had access whenever he pleased; a privilege which was, to him, a source of much enjoyment, as his mind was naturally imbued with a taste for whatever is beautiful in nature or in art, and here that taste found various objects to gratify it. But Mr. Benson had a source of pleasure beyond what the most refined taste can bestow—he had long been acquainted with God as his character is revealed in the gospel of Jesus, and was one of those who in viewing the works of creation, are able to appreciate them—

"With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say, 'My Father made them all.'"

He had a young niece, who was sometimes the companion of his walks among the fair scenes where he loved so much to wander. "Uncle," said she, on one of these occasions, "I cannot wonder, as I hear others do, that you spend so much of your time here without getting tired of it."

"On the contrary, my dear," he replied, "I feel every day more thankful to God for having provided me with so sweet a retirement, and often say, in the words of the poet,—

'The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With praise and prayer agree;
And seem, by thy kind bounty made,
For those that worship thee.'"

"To be sure, uncle," she answered, "that is quite right; but not exactly what I was thinking of."

"And what were you thinking of, Edith?"

"You remember, uncle, how our reading and our conversation have, since I came to you, been so often interrupted by trifling and worldly people. I was, therefore, thinking that it would be pleasant to give up all intercourse with such persons, and live entirely in a beautiful solitude like this."

Mr. Benson smiled. "I fear, my dear," he said, "that you would soon be tired of it, and prove yourself one of those

'Self deluded nymphs,
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,

Then find them hidden nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town.'

But supposing the life of the recluse as pleasant as your imagination represents it, do you think it would be right? If you escaped interruption and annoyances from your fellow-creatures, you would also miss opportunities of doing them good. Now, dear niece, you profess to be the disciple of Him who died upon the cross that you might be saved; and I would ask in the words of the hymn,

'Will you do nothing for One
Who was once such a sufferer for you?'

"Do! uncle," she exclaimed; "what could a weak, sinful creature like me do for so great a Being? Did he not do everything himself; and was not the whole work of salvation for his people completed when, with his dying breath, he said, 'It is finished?'"

"Undoubtedly. In the work of saving sinners Jesus is the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and it is true that such creatures as we are can do but little for him. Still he graciously condescends to accept our imperfect services, and to make his people 'ambassadors for Christ,' 2 Cor. v. 20, and, as the apostle expresses it, 'workers together with him,' 1 Cor. vi. 1, in calling sinners to the knowledge of the gospel. The believer's works of faith and labours of love are continually referred to in the New Testament, and there is no sanction for his sitting down in idle self-indulgence, saying, 'Soul, take thine ease.'"

"Oh, uncle, is not this like receiving again the spirit of bondage? Paul says, 'If it be of works, then it is no more grace.'"

"My child, it cannot be that you quite understand me. That salvation is by grace alone, I acknowledge as readily and as joyfully as you can do. It is a glorious truth; but I have for some time feared that you have fallen into the not uncommon error of holding one doctrine so near your eyes that you can scarcely see any other. Read the Bible as a whole, and you must perceive that you are required to be an active and obedient, as well as a believing disciple. Remember the apostle James' words, 'Faith without works is dead,' and carefully examine your own heart, which you know is deceitful, lest it lead you, under the self-delusion of what you think is zeal for your Master's glory, to be nothing but an unprofitable servant."

Edith made no reply, but walked by her uncle's side in

silence till they entered an enclosure which was filled with rare and costly shrubs. A man whose head was white, and form bent with years, was employed in the light labour of sweeping up the few dead leaves which lay on the gravel walks or verdant borders. When Mr. Benson perceived him, he said, "Here, Edith, is one who has fallen into an error, the opposite of what I believe to be yours. I have often talked to this poor old man, in my visits to this shrubbery, about the one thing needful; he knows, and I think feels himself to be a sinner, saying from the heart, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?' But, alas! he cannot believe that God has himself appointed that Intercessor of whom he experiences the want, and thinks that he must purchase, or, at least help to purchase, with his own imperfect works, that redemption which is so freely offered 'without money and without price.'"

The old man now perceived their approach, and, resting on the top of his broom, welcomed Mr. Benson with a smiling countenance.

"I am glad to see you looking so cheerful, David," said that gentleman. "I hope the matter that made you so uneasy when I was last here has been settled to your satisfaction."

"Quite so, sir, I thank you, and I am now as easy and as happy as I could be in this world."

"I rejoice to hear it," returned Mr. Benson. "You were in debt to your landlord, and no longer able by labour to discharge your debts or support yourself. How has it been settled?"

"I told his lordship all about it, sir, and he did just like the master you read about for me in the parable. Seeing I had nothing to pay, he freely forgave me. But, sir, he did more than this; he has given me my cottage rent-free, and, though I am not able to earn them, my usual wages as long as I live. Is not that goodness and kindness, sir?"

"How is this, David? You say that your landlord has freely bestowed upon you a dwelling and everything else to make you happy; and here I find you working for him harder than ever. I never saw you sweep the grass with such vigour before."

"Because I do it from the heart, sir, just out of love and gratitude to one who was so good to me. Keeping this shrubbery in nice order is the only way I have of showing how I feel his goodness, and I begged of him to allow me to do that."

"No, no, David. You do all this just to pay for your house and to earn your livelihood. You would try to make me believe that your landlord is so very good as to give them all for nothing—quite unearned."

The old man looked surprised, and somewhat vexed. "I wonder, Mr. Benson," he said, "that you should refuse to believe in the goodness of my landlord. You must often have heard that he was kind and generous, and I am sure you have said so to me more than once. And as for myself, sir, how could I be foolish enough to think that the little work I do in dressing and keeping this shrubbery would pay for my cottage and maintain me comfortably, to say nothing of the debt I owed? No, sir, they are mine, and given up to me, though I were never able to do a stroke of work again; but I find more pleasure in trying to do what I can to please my good master, because I love him, and think more of his praise when he says, 'Well done, David; those azaleas show your care,' than I do of all the wages I could earn."

"David," said Mr. Benson, "if I doubted that your master had forgiven you, and done so much for you, could you wonder, when you have so often doubted and even denied the free mercy and love of my Master. You would never believe me when I assured you that the very little I was able to perform in his service was a work of love, and not by way of paying for the blessings he bestowed upon me, and that he was equally ready to bestow them upon you."

"Oh Mr. Benson! oh sir!" interrupted the old man, "I see now what you are at. I understand it now in a way that I never did before. Will God really forgive me and receive me as I am?"

"David," answered the gentleman, "search your Bible well for an answer to that question, and I trust, 'the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'* We can, if the Lord will, soon meet again and talk of these things."

Mr. Benson and his niece walked on. "Edith," he said, "do you see anything like the spirit of bondage in the services which this old man renders to his kind and generous landlord?"

"Dear uncle," she replied, while her eyes were moistened with tears, "while I listened to the simple illustration which you used in conversing with David, I might truly have said

* Eph. i. 18.

as he did, 'Now I see what you are at. I understand it now as I never did before.' You were right when you said that I was in an error the opposite of his—perhaps as dangerous."

"Yes, my child, if his extreme be legalism, yours too often leads to antinomianism. May it now appear that the Holy Spirit has led you both into the simplicity of gospel truth. Henceforth may it be your earnest desire, in your way through this busy world, to do his will, and follow His example 'who loved you and gave himself for you;' feeling your weakness, but able to say with Paul, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,' Phil. iv. 13. May the utterance of your heart be ever—

'How shall I follow him I serve?
 How shall I copy him I love?
 Nor from those blessed footsteps swerve,
 Which lead me to his seat above?
 Thou who for Peter's faith didst pray,
 Against whose blessed self were hurl'd
 The tempter's darts, be Thou my stay;
 Help me to overcome the world.
 Thy grace can make the boastful meek,
 The wavering firm, the sinful pure,
 Put heavenly might upon the weak,
 And make those happy who endure.'"

E. F. G.

LESSONS FROM WAR.

WAR DECLARED.

WE should endeavour to learn lessons from whatever is taking place around us, and to gather good even from painful events. The Saviour, when a teacher on earth, often made use of the objects which were before him, and of the events which were well known to his hearers, to set forth and to press home the great truths which he taught. Thus also the apostle Paul acted. He referred to the Grecian games, in order to illustrate the Christian race, 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25; to temples used for religious worship to exhibit the church of God, Eph. ii. 20—22; and to the "wars and fightings" which unhappily have in all ages been so common, to describe the soul's conflict with the powers of darkness, Eph. vi. 12, 13.

War is the subject which every one now thinks upon and talks about. After a general peace of unusually long continuance the trumpet of war has again sounded; its harsh notes have gone forth among the nations, and have been responded

to by the rush of armies, the clash of swords, the booming of cannon, the dying groan of the warrior, and the wail of the widow and orphan. Tens of thousands have already fallen, and what the end will be no one can tell. We can only look up in earnest prayer, and believing confidence, to Him "who sitteth above the water floods;" who while he chastises nations for their sins by means of the dreadful scourge of war, can overrule men's pride and passions, and Satan's malice, for his own glory and the spread of his truth. Let us earnestly supplicate him to do this; to defend and guard our beloved country, and to speedily bring the dreadful strife to an end.

It is some consolation to know that every effort was made to prevent war, that our country entered upon it with reluctance (not through cowardice but from humanity), and that we believe that we have right on our side. The nation with whom we are engaged in war is the enemy alike of human freedom and Divine truth, the oppressor of God's ancient people the Jews, and the restless encroacher on the territories and liberties of all neighbouring nations. Still it is sad, very sad, that we should be again at war. Its horrors are fearful, its immediate effects are distressing. But seeing that it could not be prevented, and cannot at present be stopped, let the sad scene draw out our sympathies in right directions. Let us pray much to God, hope confidently in him, look upon the dread scene itself, "and receive instruction."

War has been declared by some of the leading powers of Europe, and other mighty nations may soon be involved in the fray. But let not this conflict, great as it is, divert our attention from a war much greater, and one which still more closely concerns us. War has been declared in the high places of the universe. The great God, and many of his rational, responsible, immortal creatures are the parties engaged. This war has already raged without intermission for many thousands of years, and is still going on as fiercely as ever. *When* it will end we do not know, but we may know *how* it will end; and if we will take the trouble to inquire, we may also know whether we shall be found among the defeated and the crushed, or among the pardoned and the reconciled.

This great war began with the creature, who rushed into mad rebellion against his almighty, wise, and holy Sovereign. There was "peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." Not a ripple of unholy passion stirred the great ocean of being. The peace of God kept all creatures in unity and love. When,

lo ! one of the greatest of the hosts of the Eternal unfurled the banner of rebellion, and many joined it. Next, this revolted spirit tempted man, the new created friend of God, to declare war against his Maker, and this was also done. Never was anything more unprovoked, more foolish, more wicked, than man's act. And now the insulted King, in his turn, declares war. He had before this banished angelic rebels from his palace, without any hope of pardon or restoration to favour. And now man has joined the enemy's ranks, must he not also share their doom ? Listen with wonder to God's declaration, " And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. iii. 15. Is this a declaration of war against man the sinner ? Certainly not ! It reads more like a proclamation of mercy, it breathes of hope for man : true, there is war with some party—a war which will result in complete victory and triumph. Let us diligently inquire into the meaning of this declaration.

These wondrous words interpreted by other Scriptures clearly meant, " A deliverer shall appear in human nature, a true man, but also Divine. He will undertake the sinner's cause, he will suffer, he will conquer, he will crush the head of Satan, he will make an end of sin." To this declaration the hearts of all who hoped for deliverance clung in simple trust. Ages rolled on, evil increased fearfully—"the earth was filled with violence," terrible judgments failed to warn the rebels, the hearts of the few loyal ones began to sink, but still the banner reared in Eden continued to wave on high. Hell could not tear it down, time could not tarnish its beautiful tints. Ever and anon a voice was heard, " O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction : repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." " Lo, I come !" "mighty to save."

At length, amidst a loud burst of celestial melody, the great Deliverer came ; " the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." By humiliation, tears, sorrow, and agonies yet untold, he achieved the conquest. By lying in the manger, by overcoming Satan in the wilderness, by living a holy and beneficial life in our world, by agonizing in the garden, by dying on the cross, by resting in the grave, by rising from it, he carried on the war most successfully. And now in the highest heavens, at the right hand of God, He having " all power in heaven and in earth " is " the Captain of our salvation."

Before he ascended thither he gathered around him a little band of true-hearted soldiers, and bade them in his name and strength carry on the war which he had so successfully begun. "Go ye into all the world," he said, "and preach the gospel to every creature." Preaching the gospel is a declaration of war against ignorance, superstition, and sin of every kind. These are the works of Satan, the earth is yet full of them, and nothing can destroy them but the truth of God. One who was successful beyond almost any other in this great conflict nobly exclaims, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds,)" 2 Cor. x. 3, 4. and he exhorts all who would conquer to "take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

"These weapons of the holy war,
Of what almighty force they are
To make our stubborn passions bow,
And lay the proudest rebel low.
Nations, the learned and the rude,
Are by these heavenly arms subdued ;
While Satan rages at his loss,
And hates the doctrine of the cross."

But before we can honestly declare war against God's enemies, and engage heartily in this holy conflict, we must ourselves be conquered. It is a solemn truth that by nature we are all at war with God, "enemies in our mind by wicked works." Happy, indeed, are those who can in truth say, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." The Holy Spirit has shown such persons the evil of sin in this respect, that it is against God. Sin is not only a suicide, destroying the soul, but a deicide, aiming to dethrone God. When this is seen, then how great, how vile, how inexcusable does it appear! Then nothing but an infinite remedy will meet this desperate case. But when the soul sees the greatness of Him who made the atonement, even the Son of God, he perceives that his sins, though great and inexcusable, are yet the acts of a creature; while the atonement is the act of one who is Divine as well as human. When this great sacrifice is viewed, when God's record concerning it and his invitation and command to rest upon it are believed, then the enmity of the heart is slain, the character of God appears lovely, his commands are loved, his glory sought.

Reconciliation to God produces deep revenge against sin, and holy resolutions to serve and glorify God. Then war is

declared against all sin, and especially against sins of the heart. All who are led by the Holy Spirit to the cross for pardon, make use of it also for purity. By it they are "crucified to the world," and by it the Holy Ghost helps them to "mortify the deeds of the body," to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts." Thus released from the guilt and dominion of sin themselves, they will pity others still enslaved, and will go forth seeking to lead sinners to that Saviour who so willingly saved them.

When war is declared by a nation, constant efforts are made to increase its armies, and various inducements are held forth to persuade persons to join them. Let this be done by all the soldiers of the cross. You may confidently promise great things to all who will leave the ranks of Satan and join the armies of Immanuel. And you may quite as positively tell all you meet that it will be a fearful thing to be found fighting in favour of sin and Satan, and against redeeming love. Under the gospel God proclaims peace to the worst rebel in Satan's army who is willing to be reconciled; but he declares an irreconcilable war with unbelief. The most fearful curses are denounced against those who "neglect so great salvation." Reader, are you God's friend or enemy? If the former, be loyal-hearted; if the latter, submit at once. "As though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." J. C.

THE TWO GROCERS.

MR. EVANS had been for many years the only grocer in the small village of B——. He was not a very active man, nor a clever man, but he endeavoured conscientiously to do his duty in the state of life in which God had placed him; yet, though he laboured diligently at his counter all day long, weighing, measuring, and counting, he had never been able to make a fortune. His family was large and sickly, the doctor's bills were always very heavy, and he had numbers of bad debts owing to him. Many people would say he did not always act in a business-like manner. For instance, he sometimes gave credit to very poor people; when miserable, sickly-looking creatures came to him for small quantities of tea or sugar, or a candle, he could not refuse them, though he knew there was no chance of his being paid again. Often, too, when a family had run up an account, he would call with his bill, but when he saw how wretched the home was, and heard

the pitiful tale of misery the poor mother would tell him, with tears in her eyes, his heart would fail him to press his claims, and he would go away, saying, "Never mind, don't distress yourself to pay me, any time will do." He would then walk home, with a feeling of satisfaction on his mind at not having added to the distress of a fellow mortal. All this was no doubt very unbusiness-like, and some laughed at him for it.

There was just opposite Mr. Evans's shop a large house, which had been shut up for a long time. However, one day the bills were taken from the windows, the doors were thrown open, carpenters, painters, and workmen of all sorts were in full employment upon it, and the news spread that a new grocer from the city was going to open an establishment there. "Mr. Evans must look sharp now," cried one. "He will soon be ruined with his slow ways," cried another. "It does one's heart good," said many, when the new shop was fairly thrown open, "to see all the nice things there are in the windows." There were constantly crowds of people gathered round the doors, reading the prices,* printed in large letters, on coloured paper, and looking at and remarking on everything.

The inhabitants of B——, like those of many other small villages, had but very little novelty to talk about, and being fond of gossip, anything out of the common way interested them greatly; and the idea of the competition between the grocers was delightful. "One of them must give way," said they, "for this small place will never support two."

From the very first day the new shop was open the success was wonderful. Who that had any money to lay out would go to Evans's dull-looking place, to pay a higher price than Mr. Brown sold for. Everything looked so bright and showy about the new shop that the hearts of the people of B—— were won immediately. The tea was some pence in the pound cheaper; the sugar, too, was a penny less, and much whiter; and there were gay-looking pots of marmalade and jam, and bottles of pickles at an unheard-of price. Mr. Brown stood behind the counter with a smiling face, and had a merry word and a joke for everybody; but he knew very well what he was about, and while he would talk to the working people with a loud voice and in a jesting tone, he was all respect and deference to the higher classes when they came into his shop; then his voice could not be too low, nor his manner too obliging. Mr. Evans was a standing joke with him; if he could not sell him down, he was determined, at least, to laugh him down, and many who came to buy of him joined in the laugh at the

master of the dingy shop, while they felt their faces flush at the thought that there was a pretty long score against them on the books of the old shop still.

On Sundays, too, Mr. Brown had an off-hand way of doing things; he made up, as he said, for his week's work, by staying half the day in bed, and when he got up and had dressed in his best clothes, he would hire a gig and drive to some place in the country with his family. In the evening he had many visitors, for his hearty manner soon gained him acquaintances, and all the gay young men of the village dropped in when they liked, to take a glass with him, and have a chat.

Mr. Evans soon began to suffer from the success of his rival; his best customers all seemed to have left him, and his heart grew sad as he saw them, one by one, enter the bright-painted door on the other side of the way. "I sell my goods as low as I possibly can," said he to himself; "I never make an unfair profit on anything, and I give full measure, for I would not cheat any one for all the world's wealth. How can my neighbour make his prices so low? there must be something wrong. God forbid I should judge him harshly, but a good article, such as I always keep, cannot be sold, with full weight, at the price he sells it."

Though Mr. Evans said this over and over again in his own mind, he did not tell his suspicions to any one, nor did he in any way turn Mr. Brown's doings into a jest; indeed he felt too sad at heart for jesting. Only the very poor came to him now, and two or three of his old good customers, who remained true through all, so that his receipts and his profits grew less and less every day; sickness, too, was heavier than usual in his family, and the poor man, losing his usual help from them, had to work harder than ever. All day long he stood behind his counter, looking pale and harassed, yet still conscientiously not even striving to lower his prices to Mr. Brown's. "If I make one thing less," thought he, "I must make up for it in others—that would not be fair dealing. I would not, by any unjust gain, increase my substance. God tells me, 'That which is altogether just shalt thou follow.'"^{*} Mr. Evans firmly believed that it was the Lord's hand that directed all his affairs, and he did not despair. Far from it; he had more time now to think of the Lord's dealings with his children, and as he stood in the almost empty shop, text after text of Scripture would come into his thoughts, and cheer his heart with their promise. When, for a moment, he fancied

^{*} Deut. xvi. 20.

nothing but ruin stared him in the face, he would slowly repeat to himself, "I have been young; and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."* "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."†

The old shop became more dingy than ever; the paint looked so dismal and dirty, compared to the bright colours on the shop across the street. Mr. Evans had long intended to get his house fresh painted, but now the loss of custom put aside all thoughts of laying out money in that way.

Many months passed on; Mr. Brown was still as noisy, and his shop as showy as ever, but somehow the people of B—— were not quite as well pleased with it. At first there was only a whisper among them, and then some began to talk aloud, that though the prices were the same, very inferior articles had been substituted for the first samples. The tea had no flavour; the sugar did not sweeten well. One person had found, she was sure, a piece of turnip-skin in the marmalade, and Squire Watkins told his cook to buy no more pickles at Mr. Brown's, for they made him feel quite ill. Slowly and surely all these reports had their due effect, and the stream of customers began to ebb back to Mr. Evans' again. "There's one thing," said some, "if you do pay a little more there, you may be certain the things are good and wholesome, and he gives good weight, which I don't think Mr. Brown does." Mr. Brown did not take the desertion of his customers as quietly as Mr. Evans had done: he said sharp things, and sometimes lost temper when he saw them, so that they avoided the more going to his shop, lest they should be found fault with.

Perhaps it may be thought that Mr. Evans felt proud at the return of his popularity, and took his revenge on his rival, but it was not the case; no one ever heard him triumph, or say Mr. Brown deserved it for cheating, or that he thought it would be so: however, he could not but feel thankful that the poverty which threatened him was turned away for the present, though he had not been envious of the success of his neighbour, nor did he rejoice now at his mortification.

Poor Mr. Brown soon had reason to own that "honesty is the best policy," even when the affairs of this world only are in question. He had come to B—— to set up business with but little capital, and was one of those who are anxious to "make haste to be rich." He never considered that in taking what advantage he could of his customers, he was

* Psa. xxxvii. 25.

† Psa. cxix. 75.

breaking the laws of man, and, more important still, the laws of God: "A false balance is abomination to the Lord;"* "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house;"† "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent."‡

There was soon a new event for the inhabitants of B—— to talk about. One morning Mr. Brown was not to be found, he had fled from his creditors, taking all the money he had made in the village with him. That day the shop was shut up, and his poor wife and three little children remained weeping in the back room; the cowardly husband and father had left the weak and helpless to face those he had wronged. There was soon an auction of the goods and furniture, and the B—— people saw, with something like pity, that everything was taken from the house and shop, while the poor deserted family still stayed in the empty rooms. The creditors were even more merciful than the husband, for they gave Mrs. Brown money to go with her children to their native place.

Many were the rumours brought into Mr. Evans's shop on the day of auction, but the report that pained him most was, that the steamer Mrs. Brown was to embark in would not leave for nearly a week, and during all those days and nights they would have to remain in the bare rooms. Mrs. Brown had no money for lodgings, and in her present misery she felt thankful for even a roof over her head. Mr. Evans thought all this over in his mind. "Poor things," said he; "how truly bitter their lot appears to be! None of the people here seem inclined to do much for them; I cannot bear the idea of their staying there so desolate. I have two rooms I can spare; shall I offer them a home here for the time? Mr. Brown certainly did his best to injure my trade and my character, but what of that now? Rather let me show, by helping his family in their hour of need, that I forgive him; 'not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.'"§ Mr. Evans felt more than rewarded for his kind action when he saw the poor wife and her children sitting round the fire in his comfortable room. He got all the dainties he could think of for them, consoled them in their sorrow, and bade them look for better days. For the first time they ventured to turn towards the future with something like hope, and even grew cheerful as he talked with them. He did not lose sight of them till they were safe on board the steamer,

* Prov. xi. 1.

† Prov. xv. 27.

‡ Prov. xxviii. 20.

§ 1 Pet. iii. 9.

and then, with many presents and good wishes from him, he saw them leave the shore.

Would any one sneer at this also, and call it a mean and unbusiness-like proceeding? Perhaps some would; but Mr. Evans did not make the opinion of the world his rule of action; he looked far higher, and sought with his whole heart to please Him who says, "Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."*

Mr. Brown called taking the shop in B—"a speculation." Had he been successful he would have felt no scruple as to any of his actions towards his customers; he would have continued to joke, and get as much profit as he could from them. He cared little for the laws of man while he could evade them, and the laws of his Divine Master gave him still less concern. Thus he set out on a dangerous and wicked course; he began with dishonesty, and ended as a coward with flight, flying from his creditors, and even from his poor family. Oh, how much happier is the lot of those, who, from love to God, do their duty worthily in this world, striving, above all, to do it as Christians, bringing their cares and hopes before the Lord in prayer, and looking unto him as their guide. Great and mighty as the God of heaven and earth is, he shows in the Bible that he takes an interest in the everyday affairs of men: "A false balance is abomination to the Lord;"† "The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment."‡ He says also, "Thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."§ A man who prayerfully reads his Bible to know God's will and do it, could not be dishonest or unjust, or hardhearted, for the very precepts it gives are truth and justice and mercy; "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live."|| "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice;"¶ "He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed."**

There remained only one grocer in B—for Mr. Evans had no other rival, and the people of the village would never be so easily drawn away again by novelty. Mr. Brown's career was a lesson to them; it taught them in future to be-

* Luke vi. 35.

† Prov. xi. 1.

‡ Prov. xii. 19.

§ Deut. xxv. 15.

|| Deut. xvi. 20.

¶ Prov. xxi. 3.

** Psa. xxxvii. 26.

ware of fair profession, with no sterling principle to back it; and it taught them also to observe the full excellence of Mr. Evans's character. He had suffered from adversity; he had received contempt from those he had served, and now prosperity and success crowned his years of toil; but through all this he was still the same—a lowly-minded, true, and earnest follower of his Saviour; striving, in his own humble way, to do as much good for his fellow-creatures as he could. His shop no longer looked dingy and poor, for he was enabled to enlarge and improve it. His two sons and one assistant shared the duties of the business with him, so that he had, at last, some rest. The Lord was pleased that the work of his hands should prosper, and that he should enjoy the fruits of his honest labour. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."*

THE PRAYING SISTER.

FRANK and Henry W— were the sons of a gentleman who some time after his marriage, was, through the mercy of God, awakened to a sense of his state as a sinner, and brought to a saving knowledge and belief of the truth as it is in Jesus. He was visited with much personal and family affliction, through which he was supported by the hopes of the gospel. In the midst of his trials he showed great earnestness in endeavouring, with prayer and exhortation, to lead his children to give themselves to Christ. After patiently enduring, he closed his life, testifying to the grace of God which had given him salvation and peace; and, with his dying breath, urging his family to seek the same blessings for themselves, he exclaimed, "Be sure that you all meet me at the right hand of God." His work was then done, and his spirit took its flight to the regions of eternal rest.

The solemn injunctions of the dying parent seemed to make no impression on his sons. They were young, and the world was before them, and its allurements were stronger in their unrenewed hearts than their father's injunction to meet him at the right hand of God: thus, like the rest of the world's votaries, they went on frowardly in their own ways.

But there was one child who did not turn a deaf ear to the solemn command of her dying father. She was the only

* Luke vi. 38.

sister of those two brothers. Her father's words still sounded in her ears, and sank deep in her heart, and influenced by the Holy Spirit of God, she said, "I will prepare to meet my father at the right hand of God." The glorious work was commenced within her. She felt that she was a sinner, and that without an interest in Jesus she must everlastingly perish. "God be merciful to me a sinner," was her constant cry: nor did she cry in vain. The Lord had mercy on her; she was enabled to believe, and the happy time arrived when she exchanged the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Having passed out of darkness into marvellous light, the value of the immortal soul, the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of being always ready, so engrossed her thoughts that she could not look on those around her without feelings of the deepest concern for their eternal welfare. Amongst those for whom she felt most were her two brothers. She was a few years younger than Frank and older than Henry.

At this time Frank, the eldest, left the parental roof, and mingled largely with the world, in what is called genteel society, and surrendered himself to the follies and the vices which are found there as well as in every other class among men not renewed by the Holy Spirit to become the willing and faithful servants of Jesus Christ.

F. W.— for some time pursued a course of much wickedness, and then married. His wife made no profession of religion. The change, however, affected an outward reformation in him. Being now at a great distance from the scenes of his youthful days and his mother's home, he could have no communication but by letter with those he still loved. His letters showed no change of heart towards God and holiness.

This was enough for his loving sister to know. With anxious solicitude she thought of him: with a heart of tenderness she yearned over him. She wrote to him repeatedly; she besought him; she entreated him to consider his state and his prospects for eternity. In reply to those affectionate letters he coldly thanked her for her counsel; or sometimes wrote as if he had not read her letters. She resorted to the throne of grace, there she wrestled, and her constant cry was, "O God, convert my brothers," while she seemed agonized in body and troubled in spirit on their behalf.

For nearly four years this devoted sister continued thus to pray on behalf of her much-loved brothers, without any apparent fruit to encourage her in her work of faith and love. Her faith had well nigh failed, when a change in her brother

Frank's circumstances brought him to his mother's house again; here everything reminded him of the past; his mother's beaming face, his sister's disinterested love, her consistent deportment, and, above all, her anxiety about his salvation, so affected him that his heart was softened. He accompanied her once more to the house of God; the word preached sank deep in his heart; the effectual fervent prayer of this devoted young Christian availed much, the desire of her heart was granted; she saw her brother a penitent; and who could describe her feelings as she heard him inquiring the way to Zion with his face thitherward? After much penitential pain and anguish of spirit, he was enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with the heart unto righteousness; and he could now say, Lord, I will praise thee, for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and now thou comfortest me. The praying sister's oft-preferred petitions were answered, and with grateful hearts they praised a pardoning God together. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that." "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days," Eccl. xi. 1, 6.

Frank W— again left his mother's home, but he left it a new creature in Christ Jesus. Circumstances required him to mix again with the world in the way of business. He was opposed and ridiculed for his religion, but he bore it all like a follower of Jesus, until his enemies were forced to admit that he was governed by lofty and holy principles such as the religion of Christ alone can confer.

But there was one more for whom many prayers had already been presented. The sister felt encouraged to persevere on behalf of her younger brother Henry, and to him her attention was earnestly directed; she conversed with him freely; she urged him affectionately to seek the Lord while he may be found; she prayed with as well as for him; but he seemed to turn a deaf ear to her warning voice: still she was not discouraged. At last, to her great joy she found him at private prayer. "Glory to God," she exclaimed; "the work of grace is commenced, and He who has begun a good work is able to perform it, and will carry it on until it is accomplished." According to her faith, so was it done unto her; in a few months after her eldest brother's conversion there was joy in heaven over the younger, who being deeply convinced of sin, was led to cast his guilty soul, by faith, on the atonement and righteousness of Christ, and rejoiced in

the knowledge of a sin-pardoning God. The transforming power of the grace of God has seldom been more clearly displayed than in the conversion and exemplary conduct of Henry W—. He became a devoted Christian, labouring for the salvation of others with earnest zeal. Frank and Henry W— loved their sister not only as brothers, but as Christian brothers. Her words sank deep into their hearts, and were fondly cherished. They all laboured for God, constrained by the love of Christ to act and think and speak for him.

Dear reader, have you unconverted relatives? Do you pray for them? If you cannot answer in the affirmative, begin now, and follow the example of the praying sister; oh, pray for yourself, pray for your relatives, and you may surely trust that the same glorious result will follow; pray without ceasing.

M. L. B.

DANGER AND SAFETY.

CONDEMNATION.

THE word of God declares, "Except ye be converted—ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

If you then, reader, be UNCONVERTED, and die as you are now, you are undone for ever.

Is it not "appointed unto men once to die?"

Is it not quite *uncertain* how soon you may die?

May it not be this very day?

After death there is the judgment.

How can you stand before the bar of God?

One single sin, unpardoned, would ruin you for ever.

But you have committed thousands.

You may be decent outwardly, but God looks on the heart.

It is God who will be your Judge.

He knows your very thoughts.

Would you like any one to know of you all that God knows?

However honest, and sober, and moral you have been in the eyes of men, *it is not love to God that has made you so.*

Love to God is his first great command.

But you have not loved him—you do not love him now. For want of this, all you do is sin.

"The wages of sin is death."

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

"The lake of fire—this is the second death."

"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

“Again, if you live and die as you are, you are undone for ever. There is but one way of escape.

Reformation will not save you.

Vows and good resolutions will not.

Your best endeavours are of no avail.

If you could avoid sin and obey God perfectly the rest of your life, that would not atone for your past sins.

But you cannot do this.

Your “heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” You cannot change it.

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.”

You *have* destroyed yourself—you *cannot* save yourself. If left to yourself, your case is hopeless—utterly hopeless.

You are *ungodly*—the bond-slave of Satan—and *without strength* to break your chains, or to do anything pleasing in the sight of God.

But God has loved and pitied us.—Hear what he says:—

SALVATION.

“When we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*.”

Why was this?

In order that “to him that worketh not [having no strength to work], but *believeth* on him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith might be counted to him for righteousness.”

If God reckons or accounts you righteous, who then shall condemn you?

“But I am not righteous,” you say.

No; but Christ, the Son of God *is*, and he was made sin for us; he was treated as a sinner in our stead; he bore our sins—our guilt—our condemnation; he died upon the cross (though in himself he knew no sin), “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

This renders it just for God to justify or reckon righteous all who believe in Jesus—all who believe God’s record of his Son.

The vilest sinner upon earth, if he sees himself to be so, and believes in Jesus as his Saviour, trusting in his precious blood as an atonement for sin, is justified freely, and has everlasting life.

There is no other way of salvation for the most respectable, moral man upon earth.

God says, “there is no difference,” that “all have sinned.”

God has opened this way of salvation to all,

There is no other way.

At the judgment it will not be that some are sinners and others not. All are sinners. Reader, you and I are.

The difference will be, that some will, through grace, have believed God's testimony, and submitted to his righteousness. These will have eternal life and glory.

Others will be found to have despised or neglected this great salvation. These will inevitably perish.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Better have the wrath of all men, yea, of all created beings, upon you, than the wrath of God.

Dear friend, flee to Christ! There is salvation in none besides.

Nothing can ruin you eternally but turning away from him.

If you are conscious of having upon you the guilt of ten thousand sins, yet come to Christ, and come *just as you are*.

And *come at once*. Then Christ will make you all that you ought to be. Christ himself has said, "Him that cometh to me I will *in no wise* cast out."

TRACT ANECDOTE.

THE STONE-BREAKERS.

How various are the methods God adopts to enlighten, instruct, and encourage his people! His hand may be distinctly traced in circumstances that at first sight appear trivial, by the results which they produce. Taking one path instead of another has led to the formation of an acquaintance, which has proved a blessing to one or both of the persons thus brought together. And although the miraculous voice which said to Philip, "Arise and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert," do not sound, the Spirit of the Lord directs the way of his people as certainly now as in the first ages of the Christian church. It may be they are guided into a way "which is desert;" but even there their Master has some work for them to do, or some lesson to learn, which only there could be effected.

On a bright morning I went out for a walk. Scarcely a human being crossed my path, and my own spirit was depressed and saddened by the solitude of the scene, and unable to respond to the cheering influences that surrounded me. At length I approached two aged men who were breaking stones by the road-side. On reaching them I asked one, who stood

resting on the spade with which he had just thrown a heap together, if he would accept a tract. "Yes, and thank you, ma'am," he answered. As I was taking the tract from my pocket, he fixed his eyes steadily upon my face. "There is a text," said he slowly, and paused. "Well," said I, as he seemed to wait for encouragement to proceed, "what text?" "There is a text," he resumed, "that says, 'No man careth for my soul,'—but here is a woman that cares for mine."

The quaint remark gave a turn to the current of feeling, and I replied, "I am glad to hear you repeat one text, and hope you are acquainted with many others in the precious word of God, and, above all, that you know that dear Saviour there revealed to us."

"Yes," answered the old man, "I know something—a little of his love."

When I had expressed my joy that such was the case, he asked, "Is it possible to know that our sins are forgiven?"

The reason of his putting this question I could not quite comprehend; it was evidently not for his own satisfaction,—perhaps it was for the sake of his aged companion. "Certainly," I answered; "there can be no solid peace for a convinced sinner if he has no sense of the forgiveness of his sins; and our Lord says to his disciples, 'Peace I give unto you.' Many other passages of Scripture were mentioned, such as Rom. v. 1, Rom. viii. 16, 1 John iii. 14.

"Well," said the old man, "I have been and I am a poor sinful creature, but my sins are all forgiven." He then spoke with joyful anticipation of the period when he should have no more sin, and should serve the Lord Jesus without a hindrance, see him as he is, and be made like him.

"And does your companion know anything of the love of Christ?" I inquired.

"Answer for yourself," said he, who had first spoken.

The aged man raised his eyes from the heap of broken rock before him, on which they had been fixed during the whole time his work-fellow and myself had been talking; "Yes," he said, in a humble and rather mournful tone, "I know him, I have known him these five-and-twenty years."

After a little more conversation on the Divine faithfulness in keeping his people through a long life, even to old age and to hoary hairs, and his promise to uphold them to the end of their days, and bring them safely to his heavenly kingdom, the first old man put this question to me: "Isn't it sometimes rather taking up a cross to offer tracts?" Before I could

reply he added, "Well, but don't be backward; give them to all you meet; they may do good."

The plain question and simple exhortation touched my heart. Often have I felt it "taking up a cross," and have shrunk from it, allowing opportunities to pass unheeded. These "lost opportunities" are surely to be lamented. For although the purposes of God must be fulfilled, and "enlargement and deliverance" may "arise from another place," though I hold my peace,* the sin of negligence and unfaithfulness in my Master's service still rests upon me, only to be removed by a fresh application of the blood of Jesus; and will not such moral cowardice dim the lustre with which I might have shone in the kingdom of my Father? †

When about to walk on, I said, "We have never met before, and may never meet again till we reach heaven; but I believe we shall know each other there, and remember this morning; for the apostle speaks of his Thessalonian converts as his 'crown of rejoicing' at the coming of Christ; this could not be unless he knew them." † The second old man again, looking up, repeated the whole passage; "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" ‡

I bade these aged pilgrims farewell with a lighter heart than I met them; and as the rough hand of the poor stone-breaker pressed mine, and both added their hearty "Amen" to my expression, "May the Lord be with you and bless you," I thanked God for thus refreshing my spirit by Christian intercourse, and encouraging me in his own work; and I unhesitatingly gave away every tract I had with me before I reached home.

Soon after parting with the two old saints, I sat down to rest on a green bank opposite the sea, surrounded by a variety of wild flowers, with groups of broom, whose yellow blossoms gave peculiar liveliness to the scene; and such a change had come over my spirit, that it could echo to every sight and sound of joy. † I could almost have fancied the face of nature changed, but the veil of sadness was removed which hid its loveliness from my view; faith was strengthened, hope enlivened, love rekindled, adoring gratitude and praise awakened. And how simple were the means by which these graces of the Spirit were invigorated! Here were two of the Lord's "hidden ones," who, but for the offer of a tract, would never probably have been known to me on earth; they were to be the instruments

* Esther iv. 14.

† Dan. xii. 3.

‡ 1 Thess. ii. 19.

in dispelling gloom, and perhaps were themselves refreshed by Christian sympathy and fellowship. How true is it that all things are to us what God makes them!

Often since that day, when experiencing the same backwardness over which I then mourned, has the tract been presented in faith and prayer, from the remembrance of the simple and earnest exhortation of the aged stone-breaker.

M. E.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

Psa. xxv. 14.

BEHOLD a pilgrim journeying on
Through the maze of earth,
His staff his prop to lean upon,
Unknown his place of birth.
Ask whence the smiles you see him wear:
The secret of the Lord is there.

Behold the traveller on his way,
Eyeing each scepce around,
Deaf to each voice that bids him stay,
Fast speeding o'er the ground.
Ask what his errand is, and where:
The secret of the Lord is there.

View him beset by beasts of prey,
Aloof from human aid;
See at his feet they prostrate lay:
How was the conquest made?
And why no look of fright or care?
The secret of the Lord is there.

Behold him weary, sick, and poor,
Yet pressing onward still,
Each trial patiently endure,
And gain each toilsome hill.
Bid him his source of strength declare:
The secret of the Lord is there.

Tell him the few he used to meet,
Dearer than aught below,
Have gathered up their weary feet,
And quitted life's frail show.
Ask whence his calm and chastened air:
The secret of the Lord is there.

Go, see him on his dying bed,
Witness his gasping breath;
He talks of blood on Calvary shed,
And says, How sweet is death!
Bestows his blessings; mounts—oh, where?
The secret of the Lord is there.



ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

It was the seventeenth of March—the day which the people of Ireland have dedicated to their patron saint—and never did a finer morning rise over the green hills and glens of the Emerald Isle. A party of young peasants who had risen before the sun, and arrayed themselves in their holiday garb, marched through their native village; some of them with flutes, rustic pipes, and a drum, announcing the arrival of their favourite anniversary by playing the national air of “Patrick’s Day.” This ceremony over, they set out through the fields in quest of shamrocks, which the men were to stick in the bands of their hats in honour of the saint; the young girls

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were already adorned with the symbol which it is customary for them to wear on these occasions—a bunch of ribbons of various colours, made up into something like the shape of a cross, and fastened upon the sleeve of the left arm.

They were a merry party as they went along, and everything about them was calculated to increase their cheerful feelings. The green fields over which they passed were so covered with dew-drops glittering in the beams of the morning sun, that, said one of the party, who was the poet of the village, in their own expressive language, "They looked as if the fairies had scattered diamonds all over the grass;" and the saying was applauded by the others. The furze in the hedges was beginning to show its golden blossoms, and the pale sweet flowers of the primrose, the blue harebell, and the gay buttercup were also appearing. Added to all this; when the music of the village band had ceased, the pleasant songs of the birds were heard; if not so loud, yet certainly more melodious.

"Boys and girls," said a young man, named Dennis Leary, "let us go up the hill-side yonder, and there we'll get plenty of shamrocks."

"Yes," replied the master of the village school, who, though he was grave and dignified, as he thought became one of his superior learning, had joined the young people in their excursion,—"~~yes~~, Dennis; you will there get the *oxalis*, vulgarly called wood-sorrel; but, as I have told you before, that is not the real shamrock. It is the *trifolium repens*, which is commonly named white clover; that is now proved to be the right thing for St. Patrick's Day."

"Well, no matter, if it has three leaves," said another; "let us get it, and see who will hinder us from wearing it."

"I see one walking up the glen there, that would hinder us doing that, or any thing else, for the honour of our own old religion," responded a fourth speaker.

"And who is that, Jack?" inquired one of the young women.

"Don't you know him, Nelly? It is the master's son, Mr. Henry. He came home to the great house two days ago, and the servants tell me he is just of the same mind that he was when last he was here, only worse, and given up to religion entirely, and would sooner be reading his books, and talking to people about them, than going out with the other young gentlemen after the hounds."

"He could not be given up too much to religion, if it was the true religion that he had," observed the schoolmaster.

"Oh! but it is not," said Dennis; "and the priest warned us not to have much to do with him when he was last at home. So let us turn into the wood and not mind meeting him."

But before there was time to act upon this suggestion, even supposing that the others approved of it, the person who had occasioned it came up, increasing his speed when he saw them, and his countenance expressing much pleasure at the meeting. He had a shake of the hand, or a smile, or a nod for each; calling them by their names, and inquiring about the health of their families. Kindness makes its way quickly to an Irish heart, and as these young people had often before experienced it in various ways from Mr. Henry N—, they gave him full credit for the sincerity of his friendly greetings, which they returned with many a cordial "Welcome home, sir;" "We are proud to see your honour among us again," etc.

"And may I ask where you are all going this morning?" inquired the gentleman.

"Looking for shamrocks to put in our hats, sir," answered Dennis; "and I remember the time, Mr. Henry, when we were boys, that you'd come with us, and put the shamrock in your hat too, though 'tis to trample it under your feet you'd do now I suppose."

"Trample it; I trample—

The shamrock, the green immortal shamrock,
Chosen leaf
Of bard and chief,
Old Erin's native shamrock?"

But tell me, Dennis, what made you suppose that I would do such a thing?"

Dennis looked rather sheepish, but answered, "Because it is in honour of St. Patrick that we wear it, sir."

"Well, and do not you think that I would respect the memory of a good man, and be willing to wear a flower as a token that I did so?"

The party appeared to be puzzled, but no one replied to the question, and Mr. N— proceeded—"Come, boys and girls, let us go to the old Danish fort on the top of the hill. The view from it will be beautiful, this bright morning: I have not seen a finer in all my travels. If I do not mistake, we shall get plenty of shamrocks there, and you shall soon see one in my hat to convince you that I am speaking truth."

He led the way, and the villagers followed, wondering what his meaning could be. "Is it that he's changed and come round to the true religion?" whispered one to another.

Arrived at the place he had mentioned, the gentleman said,
"I was right my friends. You now see that—

'Where'er we pass, a triple grass
Shoots up with dew-drops streaming;
As softly green as emeralds seen
Through purest crystal gleaming.'

Oh! the shamrock; the green immortal shamrock," and he fastened a bunch of them in his hat. His companions, delighted with the good-humour and affability of his manner, gave a merry shout of approbation at this action, but the schoolmaster came forward and said, "Mr. Henry, may I make bold to speak a few words to you? We are all wondering why you should respect the memory of St. Patrick, and may be you'd tell us, sir."

"Indeed I will, Mr. Mulcahy. I believe that St. Patrick taught the true religion, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in my dear native country; and for that I must respect and love his memory." At the mention of the blessed Saviour's name every head was uncovered, and every face assumed a serious expression. Still the party seemed even more surprised, and their spokesman, the schoolmaster, asked another question.

"Beg pardon, sir; but sure you and the saint are not of the same religion?"

"I believe we are. But tell me, Mr. Mulcahy, and you my other friends, do you know much about St. Patrick, that you may be able to judge in this matter?" It now appeared that all they knew about their patron was, that he had brought Christianity to Ireland.

"Well," said the young gentleman, "I have lately been reading the history of the saint. It is very interesting, and tells how it was that these pretty little shamrocks came to be what is called the emblem of Ireland. The sun shines bright and warm upon this green bank. Let us all stop here and I will tell you the whole story." The proposal was at once acceded to with great pleasure, and, all being attentive, Mr. N— began his recital thus:—

"St. Patrick, according to the histories which may be most depended on for what happened so long ago, was born in Scotland, at a place called Bonaven Taberniae, supposed to be Kilpatrick at the mouth of the river Clyde. He was not much more than a boy, being only about sixteen years old, when he was taken prisoner by some pirates, who carried him to Ireland, and sold him for a slave to a person whose name

was MacBrien. This must indeed have seemed a heavy misfortune to the poor lad ; but we have reason to think that he had been brought up in the knowledge and love of the Lord, and if so, he knew from the Scriptures that God can and *does* make all things work together for good to them that love him. For six years young Patrick remained in the service of MacBrien, and he saw so much ignorance of true religion in the people about him that he felt a strong desire to make them acquainted with it. No doubt his pious soul was grieved from day to day by what he witnessed ; for you must know, my friends, that until the gospel of the Lord Jesus was preached in this country, its inhabitants were idolaters, and worshipped the sun.

“After six years, Patrick was one day walking in a field which had been lately ploughed up. We may easily suppose that he often thought of his home and his parents ; and we cannot doubt that he prayed to God, to restore him to them. On this occasion the means were granted for accomplishing his desire. He saw something shining in the fresh earth at his feet, and, on stooping to pick it up, found that it was a piece of gold. With this he bought his freedom, and took the very first opportunity of returning to his friends, who were all, but especially his father and mother, greatly rejoiced to see him once more, as they had given up every hope that he was yet alive.

“The young man was, of course, very happy to find himself once more free, and in the midst of his beloved family ; but still he could not forget the people he had left, and his heart was filled with pity for their want of instruction in what is of more importance than all the riches and pleasures of this world. The more he thought of them the more anxious did he feel to go to them with the good news of salvation, and to spend his days labouring among them as a Christian missionary. This wish, though always in his mind, he did not mention to his family, as he knew that they would not be willing to part with him again ; however, it made him so uneasy that he had little enjoyment of anything, fearing he was neglecting his duty in not acting accordingly.

“One night he had a dream which decided him in this matter. He thought that he saw a man from Ireland, bringing him a letter, who said these words to him : ‘ We beseech thee, holy youth, come over and help us.’ After this, Patrick boldly declared what his intentions were, for he had now entirely made up his mind what to do, and, like St. Paul, to carry the

unsearchable riches of Christ, as a knowledge of the gospel is called, to the Gentiles. His parents and friends were, as you may imagine, very reluctant to part with him, and did all that they could to induce him to remain with them; but as he felt that it was his duty to God to go, he would not listen to their intreaties, although it must have given him great pain to refuse them.

"Patrick felt that his long residence in Ireland as a slave had been a great hinderance to his education, and that some more study and preparation for the office of a teacher would be necessary for him before he undertook it; so he went to France, and spent some time with his uncle, the good Bishop of Tours, who was well able to give him what instruction he needed. At last he was thought to be well qualified for commencing the work that he had for so long a time wished to begin, so he set out for Ireland, and landed in the county Wicklow, in the year 432. He lost no time in beginning his labours of love, and travelled through the whole country; and the people every where received him joyfully, listening with the greatest delight to the blessed truths which he proclaimed. Indeed, my friends, we cannot wonder that they were very glad to hear the good news of salvation. We are, all of us, sinners before God, and we need to obtain his forgiveness. For this end one person will try one way, and another will try another way; but if any of those people who heard St. Patrick explain to them their lost condition by nature, asked him, as it is most likely they did, 'What shall we do to be saved?' we may be sure he gave the very same answer that St. Paul gave when he was asked the same question, and replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'* He taught them that all attempts of their own to effect this great work would be in vain, because it is only the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that cleanseth us from all sin;† and by trusting to what he did and suffered for us, the vilest among us may have 'redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.'‡

Here the schoolmaster interrupted the narrator, and said, "I beg your honour's pardon again, but I would humbly ask, if St Patrick was sent by the pope to teach religion, how is it that you, sir, seem to approve of what he taught?"

To which Mr. N—replied, "I have not said one word about the pope, Mr. Mulcahy, nor are we told in any history of St. Patrick which may be depended on, that the pope (if there

* Acts xvi. 30.

† 1 John i. 7.

‡ Col. i. 14.

was one at that time) had anything to do with his coming to Ireland. You look surprised, but I can tell you what will make you think even more of the saint's teaching than if it had been as you say. He came with a commission from One whom you will all acknowledge was greater than any pope who ever reigned at Rome, for the Lord Jesus Christ himself sent him to preach the gospel in Ireland."

"Did he, sir? Well, that was the best that could send him."

"Certainly. He brought with him a book in which everything that God wished him to teach was written down; the Holy Spirit of God having directed the writing of it, so that there could not be any error in it, and out of this he taught them, having directions not to add anything of his own to it, nor to take anything from it.*

"But I promised to tell you about the shamrock. St. Patrick was one day preaching upon the hill of Tara, a place in the county of Meath, which he often chose for that purpose. No wonder he did so, for it was a place of great renown in those days, as you, Mr. Mulcahy, and any of you who have read the history of our country in the time of her ancient glory, well know."

The schoolmaster, pleased with this reference to his knowledge, answered, "To be sure, sir. It was at Tara that our kings were crowned, seated upon the famous Liafail, or 'stone of destiny,' which was afterwards taken to Scotland and used for the same purpose."

"It was; but on Tara still the venerable Patrick tried to establish a kingdom that never will pass away as ours did; or rather he tried to lead those who heard him to seek for the glory and happiness which may there be enjoyed. Patrick could assure them, from the book which I have told you of, that in the last days 'shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.'† He could tell them, on the same authority, that if they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and loved him, there would be an entrance into that kingdom given unto them abundantly.‡ And that as nothing unholy can be admitted, God's Spirit would, if they prayed for it, change their hearts, and make them fit for this glorious inheritance.§ However, I was going to tell you about the shamrock; and when I mentioned this holy, happy kingdom, which is as freely offered to every one of us now as it was then, you

* Rev. xxii. 19.

† 2 Peter i. 11.

‡ Dan. ii. 44.

§ John iii. 3; Luke xi. 13.

cannot wonder that, for a moment, every thing else should go out of my mind.

"Well, St. Patrick was one day preaching about these very things as he stood upon the hill of Tara, surrounded by a multitude of people. He spoke of the great love of God to sinners, in giving his only begotten Son for them; of the great love of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in taking our nature upon him, fulfilling for us the law which we had broken, and dying upon the cross a shameful and painful death to atone for our guilt; and then of the love of the Holy Spirit in cleansing the wicked hearts of all true believers, and making them fit to be partakers of the blessings provided for them. At the same time the saint took care to teach them what we call the doctrine of the Trinity—namely, that though the Scriptures tell us of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they also teach that there is but one God. Here many of the people interrupted Patrick, saying that they could not understand how there could be three persons in one God; and no wonder, for this great truth is beyond flesh and blood to comprehend; but as it is revealed to us by Him who cannot lie, we are bound to believe it on his word.

"When Patrick was thus interrupted, he stopped for some time, and appeared to be buried in deep thought; but to me it seems likely that the pious missionary was all the time lifting up his heart in prayer to God, to enable him to say something which might impress this important doctrine upon the hearts of his hearers, for he knew that the Lord has said of such things, that they are understood, 'not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit.'*

"After a while he stooped down and pulled a bunch of shamrocks, which grew in abundance on the place where he stood, and exclaimed, as he held them up for every one to see, 'Look at the simple wild flowers, my friends, how three leaves are all united on one stalk; and will you not believe, from the holy volume which I hold in my hand, and which was every word of it written by the inspiration of God, that there are three persons in the one God.'

"It is said that this had a most powerful effect upon the minds of the people, and that numbers of them embraced the doctrine which they had been objecting to. The shamrock became at once our national emblem, and a very pretty one it is. Let us endeavour, whenever we look at it, to think of that great truth which God has declared to us, 'There are three that

bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.*

"I have not much more to tell you of St. Patrick. He continued for many years his labours of love in our country, and died at the Abbey of Saul, in the county Down, on this very day, the 17th of March, in the year 465."

Mr N—'s auditors united in thanking him for his story, to which they had listened with the greatest interest. "Still, Mr. Henry," said Dennis Leary, "I don't quite understand how it is that a Protestant like you can be of one mind about religion with St. Patrick."

"Just in this way, Dennis. In St. Patrick's days the words *Protestant* and *Roman Catholic* had never been heard. He learned, and he taught entirely from the book of God, as I told you before. Trusting to a promise which God had made, that whoever did so should be guided into all truth, he would not be led by any human being to receive what was not written there. Now, my friends, as I happen to possess that very same book, and as God has commanded all who can do so to search it for religious knowledge,† and as I do so humbly depending upon help from above, may we not conclude that the saint and I are of one mind, as Dennis calls it?"

"And, sir, have you really St. Patrick's book—the book he learned his religion out of?" inquired several of his listeners.

"Indeed I have."

"And is it in Irish, sir?"

"To be sure. The people could not have understood St. Patrick if he had read to them in Latin. Every man heard in his own tongue wherein he was born."

"And can you read it in Irish, sir?"

"You shall hear," replied Mr. N—, drawing an Irish Testament from his pocket. "You know I picked up a good deal of it when we were all boys, hunting that wood for birds' nests, or fishing for trouts in the stream that runs through yonder glen; and I have since studied our old and beautiful language, and hope you will find me improved."

He began immediately a chapter in John's Gospel. At first there was some indication of uneasiness among his hearers. "The priest told us not to listen to his talk or his books," whispered one. "His books!" said another, "this is St. Patrick's book; and besides it is in our own language, that we

* 1 John v. 7.

† John v. 39.

can't be deceived in ;" but in a few minutes all were absorbed in attention.

When the reading ceased there were many exclamations of "Is 'nt it fine?" "'Tis most beautiful!" etc. Just then the sound of a bell ascended from the valley. "The chapel bell!" said one; "it's time to go to mass."

"May I never die 'till I hear more of that book," cried Leary as they rose to depart. "Nor I either; I could listen all day," added the schoolmaster.

"Well, my friends, I will, if it please God, walk here about four o'clock on Sunday evening, and read it for any one who wishes," said Mr. N—.

"That will be all of us, sir, I think," replied Mr. Mulcahy, as the party set out for the chapel.

E. F. G.

THE SON'S PROMISE.

SATURDAY night, with its hour of liberation from the demands of six days' toil, was fast stealing on, after a warm day, and a brilliant sunset. The river was yet gay with returning boats of all descriptions, the paddle and the oar stirring up a refreshing foam here and there on the otherwise still surface of the waters. The steps of the wanderer not bound to hasten homeward, lingered involuntarily on the bridge which spanned the scene below, and among such came a youth of respectable appearance, and just then of thoughtful countenance, who, after gazing right and left, chose a spot at a distance from all observers, and planting his arms upon the parapet, leaned over apparently to watch a boat shooting through an arch, or to note the ripples that played softly against the piers. He stood until all others, discerning but little more to attract in the deepening twilight, had retired; and still he stood until the moon shed her silver light from the deep blue sky, and few distinct sounds disturbed his reverie, save the clang of a chain as a boatman moored his bark, or the roll of a carriage over the bridge behind him. What could thus absorb the attention, and occupy the mind of David Carver? Certainly nothing visible to his bodily eyes; but to his earnest mental gaze, an object dear to his heart was distinctly and influentially present.

Many, many leagues away, the little sitting-room in his dear old home is pictured to his imagination. The window is open, and a gentle evening breeze, laden with the perfume of flowers, fans the snowy curtain, and refreshes the calm, pale

face of one who sits near it. Before the window is a little table, just large enough to bear a great open volume, on the page of which rests the hand of his widowed mother, as, unable to read further, she has taken off the spectacles, suddenly bedimmed with loving tears, and looking up to the sky where a star or two begins to twinkle, she prays to the God "whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good," for her absent boy.

If he could hear her speak, there might be the faintest tremor in her voice, but the smile would play round her lip, hope would sparkle in her eye, for faith in the pledged word of a covenant-keeping God was warm and active at her heart. Thus he had seen her on the last sabbath evening they had spent together, when her earnest counsels accompanied the maternal blessing, and, deeply touched by the tenderness of the being who loved him best on earth and the nearness of the hour of separation, David had knelt by her side, and earnestly promised to remember and to do as she desired.

"I will not exact too many promises from you, my son," she had said, "but there is one which I could desire to invest almost with the sacredness of a vow. Its fulfilment might prove a blessing; its neglect must assuredly lead to evil and sorrow. It is this, that wherever you are, however situated, tempted, or beguiled by the sophistries which sometimes make evil appear good, and good evil, you resolutely keep holy the sabbath day."

"Oh, mother!" he had exclaimed, "surely you do not think I could so far forget the habits and training of childhood and youth, as to become a sabbath-breaker."

"Not at once, David; I am sure it would cost your conscience many a pang before you could become habitually negligent of the whole of the Lord's day. But you have known few temptations at home. You have supported your mother's steps to the house of God ever since she was bereaved of her best earthly friend, and one of his dying charges on your behalf was this: 'Teach our boy to reverence the whole of the sabbath day. It is not his, not an hour of it, for ordinary work, or thought, or pleasure. It is a link between fallen man and the great Father who waits to be gracious in pardoning love through his risen and interceding Son. It is a clue amidst the labyrinth of sin, by which man may retrace his wandering steps towards his forsaken home, and he who reverences and keeps the Lord's day is at least in the way to meet the offered blessing of the Lord himself.' And now,

David, you are going where many consider all days alike, or, if there be a difference, they make Sunday the most profane and godless of the seven. Many, too, devote an hour or two to formal prayer, and claim the rest for their own amusement. Places of entertainment will entice you on every side, but oh, be never beguiled to enter one of them on a sabbath day; for if you have not opportunity to enjoy such recreation or amusement without breaking God's command, neither benefit nor pleasure can result. On the contrary, the benefit and the blessing are lodged in self-denying obedience, for it is written, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' If the Lord God set apart one day out of seven to be peculiarly hallowed, when man was innocent and happy, how much more is it needful now man is fallen and miserable, and all around him tends to withdraw his mind from Him to whom 'belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.' He who keeps the sabbath is constrained to obey another precept: 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth; while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh;' when 'man goeth to his long home,' dust returning 'to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it.' Once more, my son, if I may add a lower motive, the sabbath day will remind you of your mother, of her prayers and hopes for you, and now dare she ask you to promise to keep it holy?"

"Yes," he had earnestly answered, "I do promise."

"Not lightly, my son. Let us count some possible, nay, probable cost. A fierce struggle with some wayward will, of the strength of which you are not yet aware. The friendship of some admired companion, whose views may seem more enlarged, whose education you may deem more liberal than your own. The laugh of some mocking jester, who scoffs at God's authority as an old fable, and recognises no law but his own choice. The charge of hypocrisy, self-righteousness, fanaticism. Could you bear all this for Christ's sake?"

"I could bear it, mother, for your sake."

"Then the Lord help thee higher," she replied, with a gentle

sigh; "be it so, bear it for my sake. 'If sinners entice thee, consent thou not;' it would grieve your mother."

All this, and much more, had passed vividly through the young man's mind, as he leaned on the parapet of the bridge that Saturday night; and as the clocks struck ten, startling him into a recollection of the fast flying hours, he dropped his head upon his hands, and half murmured to himself, "It would grieve my mother; no, mother, I cannot, I will not go." Then brushing away a salutary tear, he darted off with the speed of an arrow, and paused not until he gained the door of a house, where stood a young man a few years his senior, with his hands in his pockets, lounging against the door-post, smoking a cigar.

"Ah, Carver," he cried, as David came up, "is it you? Glad to see you. Come in and take a puff."

"No, I thank you," replied David; "but I am glad to find you at home, for I wished to tell you that I have changed my mind, or rather, my intention about accompanying you to-morrow. I shall not go."

"And why not? Of course you have a good reason for disappointing me, and breaking your word."

"I am sorry to cause you any disappointment, though indeed my vanity did not suggest that possibility; but I do not remember to have pledged my word; it was rather a sort of silent consent, more weak and foolish though, I admit."

"But your reason, man, your reason," impatiently demanded the other.

"It satisfies myself, Horton, but I do not conclude it will be equally satisfactory to you, therefore it is needless to inquire."

"This is ungentlemanly," cried Horton hastily, but seeing, in the lamplight, the expression of David's countenance, he changed his tone, and added, "Forgive me, Carver, I mean it is unfriendly, unkind, when you know my desire for your company and your own enjoyment. May I not claim your confidence on this little matter?"

"I wish my reason could influence you, Horton, and in hope that it may from the kind feeling you have shown towards me, I will give it. I faithfully and solemnly promised my mother, when I parted from her, that I would reverence the sabbath day. We were intending to break it to-morrow, and the recollection of her wishes and my promise deters me."

"Ah, I see," said Horton, repressing the sneering laugh which had almost burst forth; "but come in and let us talk it

over. I can soon show you your good mother's mistake, in withholding from the Deity the acceptable offering of your enjoyment of his works in creation, and the uses to which they have been applied by the ingenuities of art. We can worship, too, more freely under the blue sky, than within the crowded walls of churches. But if you are so scrupulous, you can go and say your prayers first if you please, for we shall not start until noon."

"How long is a day?" asked David quietly.

"A day! Why from morning till night, I suppose."

"It is written 'Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.' I am decided, Horton, and, with many thanks for your intended kindness, I must say good night."

"Stop, stop, Carver! you may never have such an opportunity again. I do really wish you to see this wonderfully beautiful place, and if you will go with me to-morrow, I will never interfere with your mother's wishes again. Come, oblige me this once, and remember that your company may be useful to me. I may go to church to please you next Sunday."

This was plausible. Horton was a talented, fascinating companion. What, if he could be led to a more serious way of life. Surely one concession—even his mother might yield this—his mother! Ah, no, his uncompromising mother never did evil that good might come. Happy remembrance! "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not, it would grieve your mother;" and turning full towards Horton, the wavering moment had passed, and with one more steady and gentle refusal David bade him good night. His step was not so rapid as to prevent the shrill whistle and loud laugh of the tempter from reaching his ear, and then the bang of disappointment and vexation which was inflicted on the unconscious door.

On reaching his lodgings, David found one of the officials from the railway awaiting his arrival, having kindly called to say that a few minutes' alteration had been made in the time of departure of the excursion train, and that Carver must be at the station at a certain hour.

"I am obliged to you for taking this trouble," said David, "but I am not going, and very much regret that I ever allowed the probability."

"Not going? why, my dear fellow, you will lose a very great treat and pleasure. You had better think again, for you will certainly regret it."

"If I should die before the next sabbath, do you think I

shall regret not breaking the last one I spent on earth?" said David with some agitation, for he was afraid of another laugh of scorn.

"Is this indeed your reason?" asked his visitor, looking with earnestness and astonishment in his face.

"Partly so," said David, colouring; "but I ought to add, that the strongest reason is the counsel of a dear mother, far away, and for her sake I am resisting this temptation, which I own has been very great."

"I wish my mother's son had been as firm," said the other, feelingly. "Do you know that, for months past, I have wavered about retaining my situation because my attendance is required on the trains on a Sunday, the excursion trains too. But you see, my salary is good, and sometimes there is a cheerful party of us, drowning all thoughts about right and wrong, and so I have never come to a serious decision."

"But does not conscience interfere with your enjoyment sometimes?"

"Yes, very often, for I was well taught when a boy. I wish something would turn up elsewhere, for I really do believe I am going wrong, but then I cannot afford to be idle."

"Don't you think," said David, gathering courage in a good cause, "that the God for whose sake, and in respect to whose authority, you give up a profitable situation, would take care of you in some way?" and he added the text his mother had cited, with its promise annexed.

"Well," said the other, "I promise you I will think about this, and perhaps take the first opportunity to get free."

"I would get free at once," urged David. "Your resolution may evaporate again, and there is no need to consider whether to do a right thing: do it while you can."

"Hush, my good friend. I must take time to make arrangements: but we will talk of this further when we meet again. Good night, and I can't help being glad you are not going. I like you fifty times better for thinking of God's word and your mother's advice."

David felt happy and thankful. He read his evening chapter with interest, and knelt down to thank God for guiding his thoughts towards home that night, and the bridge was a marked spot in his little history for ever. Then he fell asleep to dream that his mother's hand was upon his head in commendation and blessing, and that her beloved face was lighted up with joy and thankfulness.

On the morrow, hundreds of gleeful pleasure seekers were conveyed to the fairy scenes which invited their admiration, and few could be disappointed in the object of their expedition. The time for return arrived, again the train was filled, young men and maidens, old men and children, satiated with the sabbath-breaker's godless enjoyments, were rushing at full speed towards home. Suddenly a shock, with results too awful and heart-sickening to describe—and how many of that giddy throng were in eternity! The news reached the city, and spread like wild-fire through every rank. Friends hurried to the station, not to meet the living but to claim the dead.

Carver, pale with excitement and mingled feelings, stood amidst the inquiring crowd. Horton, with his open defiance of God's authority, had received a summons he could not disobey, and lay mangled and disfigured among the dead.

The railway officer, with his roused convictions, his delay to "a more convenient season," was gone for ever.

David Carver turned, shocked and distressed, towards home, scarcely able to define and gather up to present before God his ardent thanksgivings for the influence that had controlled and counselled his own wavering way. At last, from the contemplation of a hideous death, and more terrific resurrection, his heart gradually calmed before the cross of Christ, realized the atonement for sin in the blood of the Lamb, and offered in humble faith to the service of God, the life that his mercy had so signally preserved.

The frightful account of the catastrophe reached the widow's dwelling, and for a moment a torturing fear distracted her heart. Could her boy be among those unhappy dead? Had he forgotten his promise?

Soon a letter from himself comforted her fears. "My dear and precious mother," it began, "you have been permitted to save your son. Temptation pressed hard; I had yielded, but recoiled only for your sake. The command to honour my father and mother, remembered in time, has brought its blessing with it, and my days are prolonged in the land. Help me up higher by your prayers, my mother, for your God shall be mine, and to him shall be dedicated the spared life of your grateful son."

The object of this little narrative is not to amuse with fiction, but to warn by fact. It occurred a few years since, in connexion with a scene of human agony seldom surpassed. The three young men lived and acted as described. May the fate

of two be a warning to surviving sabbath-breakers, and the example of the third a stimulant to prayerful parents and tempted wavering sons.

B. T.

HOME REVIEWS.

MISS EDGEWORTH.

"WELL, my children, what have you been reading in my absence?" inquired Mr. Travers.

"Books of which, I think, you will approve, papa," answered Emma. "Not having you to consult, we asked different friends if they would recommend Miss Edgeworth's works, which we had seen in Mr. L—'s library, and all agreed as to their excellence; so we brought home her *Moral* and her *Popular Tales*, and have enjoyed them greatly."

"And will now expect a review of them from you, father," added Richard.

Mr. Travers smiled. "This is," he said, "rather an unreasonable demand. You call upon me quite unprepared, to criticise writings generally approved of, and which I have not read for some time. However, I will give you my opinion of them to the best of my ability."

"Thank you, dear papa," Anna replied, "and I think you will find but little to censure in Miss Edgeworth's tales. Are not the moral excellent, and the style elegant?"

"You forget, Anna, that praise as well as censure is included in the office of a reviewer, and much the pleasantest part of it. You admire Miss Edgeworth's style, and in this you are supported by the judgment of no less a person than the great Robert Hall. Speaking of it he observes, 'She is simple and elegant; content to convey her thoughts in their most plain and natural form. This is the perfection of style. As that piece of glass is the most perfect, through which objects are seen so perfectly that the medium, the glass itself, is not perceived; so that style is the most perfect which makes itself forgotten.'"

"And do you think style of much importance, papa?" asked Richard.

"Certainly; as the medium of conveying our thoughts, and, particularly, of communicating instruction, whether by writing or speaking, it is most important; and I would recommend young people diligently to cultivate that transparency of style so well described by Mr. Hall. Miss Edgeworth is also admired for her knowledge of human character, and force in

delineating it; but with one very important branch of that knowledge I do think she was unacquainted."

"What was that, papa?"

"The innate corruption of the heart, which the word of God declares to be 'desperately wicked,'" Jer. xvii. 9.

"But, papa, are not Miss Edgeworth's writings remarkable for their strict morality?"

"No, one who reads the works of that highly gifted lady can for a moment doubt that, in writing them, her desire was to promote morality; but it seems to me, that she is sadly mistaken in the way by which she tries to do so. The motive which she sets before us for being moral is, that it is conducive to temporal happiness, to respectability, and to prosperity, not love and gratitude to God, with a child-like fear of displeasing him by violating his commands, feelings which influence those whose hearts he has cleansed 'by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' Tit. iii. 5, and which form the only foundation that can be relied on for morality. In fact, there is a total absence of religious principles and feelings in Miss Edgeworth's writings, which, I cannot but fear, must have an injurious tendency."

"The motives to morality which you say are set before the readers of these tales, papa, are certainly not the best," said Anna, who was unwilling to discover a fault in books which had afforded her entertainment. Can you recollect any particular instance which would make me understand exactly what you mean?"

Mr. Travers thought for a few moments. "There is, I think," said he, "one of her stories named 'Honesty is the Best Policy.' Its entire aim is to prove that more will be gained ultimately by honest conduct than by cheating. This is, I believe, very often the case, because the establishment of a good character greatly promotes success in business; but no doubt there are many instances in which 'the answer of a good conscience towards God' is the only reward in this life for honesty."

"In one of the tales which you have just read is another example of what I mean," he continued, taking up a volume. "This is 'The Good Governess,' and contains much that is useful and excellent. A little boy whose education had been neglected, is placed under the care of this good governess: she takes him to a toy shop, and he pilfers some article that caught his fancy. To teach him the impropriety of this, she gave him some things for his own use, and scrupulously refrained

from encroaching upon his property, thus practically explaining to him the meaning of the words mine and yours. She also told him that she could not again take him into any one's house till she was sure he would not meddle with what was not his own. He now felt the inconvenience of his lawless habits, and found that to enjoy the pleasures of society, it was necessary to submit to its duties, and began to respect the rights of things and persons.* This plan might have been, in some respects, a good one, had she first explained to him that the great God had issued a commandment against theft, to the breaking of which a tremendous penalty was annexed, to which he was justly liable; and had she told him of the only way of escape and pardon through Christ, urging him to seek them, and endeavouring to make the hope of the gospel, the love of God, and dread of offending him, more influential motives for avoiding theft than the fear of being inconvenienced if he committed it."

"You surprise me, papa," said Emma, "your remarks seem quite just; still I have heard Miss Edgeworth's system of education spoken of as excellent."

"It is so, in many respects," her father answered, "but it is deficient in the most important of all—the inculcation of religious principle. Here is the tale called 'The Good Aunt.' This lady undertakes to bring up a nephew, and her method of doing so is given as a model. Howard, the nephew, attended Westminster School, where, as you all recollect, he undertook to deliver one of the little boys from the tyranny of an older boy to whom he was fag. This intention was kind, even noble, but his way of carrying it into effect was by engaging in a boxing match. When his aunt heard this she expressed pleasure at knowing that he fought in so good a cause."

"And it was a good cause, papa, you will acknowledge," exclaimed Richard.

"I have acknowledged that already," his father replied, "my objection is to his method of supporting it. Would it not have been better if his preceptress, while she commended the kind feelings that led him to 'comfort the feeble-minded and support the weak,' according to the apostolical injunction, had reminded him that the same high authority commands us to 'be patient towards all men,' 1 Thess. v. 14. That 'the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men,' 2 Tim. ii. 24. This lady, whose management of her

* "The Good French Governess."—Moral Tales.

nephew in some other instances was excellent, after praising his conduct on this occasion, could not, in after years, with any consistency have objected to his fighting a duel.

"I could point out other illustrations from Miss Edgeworth's works to prove my assertion, that they are not written on scriptural principles, and that, consequently, the morality which they inculcate has no better foundation than mere worldly prudence, one little to be depended on in the day of temptation."

"These are, I own, serious defects in Miss Edgeworth's tales," said Anna. "But you would not deem them of sufficient importance to prevent our reading her works, papa?"

"By no means, my child. In your course through life you will become acquainted with many books, as well as people, highly commended by the world, in which and in whom you must still expect to find defects. What I wish is to prevent your being misled by a name. Give yourselves the habit of exercising your own judgments, my children, in forming an opinion on what you hear and what you read, bringing everything 'to the law and to the testimony,' decidedly rejecting what is not in accordance with it, for you may be quite sure that 'if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isa. viii. 20.

"But, papa, whatever is good in such books you would have us endeavour to profit by?" inquired Richard.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Travers, "though I must add that, generally speaking, the reading of novels is a round-about way to get at what is profitable. However, I would say concerning Miss Edgeworth, that you may glean many useful things from her writings.

"I remember meeting with a concise, but forcible criticism on them by a man of eminent genius. He says, 'I admire them; but they excite no feeling and leave no love. Still, the impression of *prudence* and *intellect* is profound, and may be useful.' This is true; the prudent self-possession of her pattern characters is worthy of imitation; and the constant desire which she manifests to stimulate young people to the cultivation of whatever degree of intellect they may possess I highly approve. To this they are incited by being shown how conducive the possession of knowledge, and a literary taste, are to success in life and to domestic happiness. This is quite true, and will have its influence on a sensible person; but a higher and holier motive may be set before us."

"What is that, father?"

"The more we learn of science or of history, the more we may become acquainted with the character and dealings of that great Being with whom we have to do. And, as I have no doubt, the powers of our minds are intended by our Creator for a state of expansion throughout eternity, we promote that object by gaining information, provided always that we employ our thinking powers in a right way. Oh, my children, never forget in your pursuit of knowledge, that the most profound learning irrespective of the religion of the gospel is, in relation to eternity, altogether vanity. May you always, like the apostle Paul, be able to 'count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord,' Phil. iii. 8; and, however keen your relish for the productions of the wise and learned of this world, ever be able to say and feel—

'Lord, thou art true; and oh, the joy
To turn from other words to thine;
To dig for gold without alloy,
From truth's unfathomable mine.'

G.

FRUIT BY THE WAY.

THE REMEDY AND THE POLISHED HORN.

I AM staying at a note on the continent where the servant who usually waits on me is an interesting young man, and always ready to stop and listen to a serious word on religion. Yesterday evening, he wept while telling me how much his present life differed from that which he led in his father's house in Germany, where every morning and evening they read the Holy Bible and prayed to God.

I then asked him if he had a Bible. "Yes," he answered; "it is in my room."

"And do you read it regularly every day?"

"Impossible, sir! At eleven or twelve o'clock at night I am overpowered with fatigue and sleep; in the morning, I must be down as soon as I am awake, and during the day I have so much to do that I cannot get even a quarter of an hour to read the Bible."

I let him tell me all that was on his conscience; and I then put this question to him: "Now tell me, John, if the physician had ordered you to take some remedy for your health every morning before going down stairs, and afterwards to drink a glass of cold water, do you think that you would say to him 'Impossible, sir, I have no time for it!' Would you

not rather regularly, and however hurried you might be, take your medicine, and drink your glass of water?"

John stood still with his eyes fixed on me, and at last said, "That is very true, sir. It is because we will not—yes, will not read the Bible, that we say there is no time for it. If we sincerely wished it, as we desire to follow the order of a doctor, ah! the time would soon be found for it."

"You will read it, then?" I said to him. "You will regularly and faithfully take this remedy for your soul's health?"

"I promise you, sir," said John. "Yes, this very evening, and from to-morrow morning I will take the remedy as you call it, sir."

Thereupon John went out, and I prayed to God that he would strengthen the weakness of this young man. And God has done so; for this morning when John brought me my breakfast, I said to him, "Well! did you take your medicine yesterday evening and this morning?"

He answered quietly, "Yes, sir; and thanks be to God, I feel much better than usual, and I hope always to take it twice a day."

I hope that John will be faithful, and that he will find at least as much time for the health of his soul as he would, if it were necessary, for the health of his body.

THE POLISHED HORN.

This morning, on returning from a walk, I passed near the shop of a worker in horn; and admiring the beautiful polish of the objects exposed in his window, I asked him if I might know by what process he polished his horn so well.

"Oh, willingly," he answered; inviting me at the same time to come in. He then showed me slowly, and in detail, the different means he used to give the horn its polish. I took the tools, and worked away myself, and at last succeeded in acquiring the art I wished.

But I also felt, just as I was going to leave, that it was not merely for this that God had led me to the workshop of this clever and obliging young man; and I asked him if he had as much peace in his soul as I had pleasure in the acquisition of the polishing process.

Thereupon, opening his heart to me, he spoke of his sins, of his unworthiness before God, and of his consequent need of a change of life, in order that he might at last be able to present himself before the Lord. In fact, he used the usual language of self-justification, telling me that he hoped that at

some future time he should change and repent, and that then God would save him.

I then said to him, "Tell me; do you think that I have made this horn by polishing it? have I not merely polished what I had already?"

He began to laugh, saying, "But, sir, it is quite evident that polishing horn is not making it; polishing it merely makes it more beautiful, but does not create it. God makes it, and we work upon it."

"Well, then," said I, "why do you think that working at and polishing your soul will make it become a child of God? If it is not so at first, will all your work and trouble make it what it was not?"

I then explained the gospel plan to him, and all that Jesus had done for sinners. I also spoke of the faith of that heart which trusts in the Saviour, and concluded by quoting the words of Scripture, that he who believes in Christ has life, and that, therefore, poor and impure sinner as he was, if he believed in Christ, he became a child of God and an heir of heaven.

"I understand," said the workman; "it is God who, for the sake of the Saviour, pardons our sins and gives us his grace."

"Assuredly; and thus, so to speak, from wood, and very bad wood too, this poor heart becomes by faith beautiful horn. But, though it become horn it is still rough and coarse, and it must be perfectly polished before God can receive it into heaven.

"Ah, I see," said the workman quickly; "it is by setting oneself to do the will of God that one becomes better; not—I see! I see!—not in order to make oneself a child of God, but because one is so already. Ah! how different is this from what I thought it was till now!"

"Do you see, then, that the horn becomes polished because it is already horn, and—"

"And not that it may become so," interrupted the workman. "This is quite simple, and I thank you much. You have taught me far more, sir, than I taught you; God be thanked for it!"

"That is to say, then, that in future you will do two things; first you will believe that our good Saviour has really bought us by his blood—"

"Yes, yes! that I will believe; or rather, I should say I think I do believe it, and with all my heart."

"And the second, dear friend, is, that you will take care more and more each day to keep the commandments of the

Lord, in order that you may become each day more like the Saviour."

"I understand! I understand! Yes, the horn must now be polished! Oh that God may polish it soon!"

I conversed some moments longer with this young man, and then left him with the delightful thought and hope that God will teach him also to polish his horn.

C. M.

LESSONS FROM WAR.

YOUR ENEMY.

It is very important that those who are engaged in war should possess a correct knowledge of the character, resources, and designs of their opponents. This has always been felt, and various means have been adopted to obtain the much desired information. Spies are often sent into the enemy's camp, who run terrible risks while seeking to obtain their object. It is equally desirable that those who are engaged in a spiritual warfare, should know who their enemies are, what are their intentions, and by what means they propose to accomplish them. There is, however, no need that we should send spies into our enemy's camp; for He to whom "the darkness and the light are both alike," and before whom "hell hath no covering," has given us full information on these subjects; and if we carefully study it, we shall not remain ignorant of the character, intentions, or devices of our great enemy.

Satan is "the enemy" of whom we speak. He is the enemy of all, and the friend of none. Even to those who are most like him, and who spend their lives in working out his wishes, he is an enemy. But he is the special enemy of the good. The image of God renewed in the soul is the eyesore of hell, and against this shining mark his malice and spite will continually shoot venomous arrows. To such as are the friends of God, we may especially say, He is "your enemy," and you need to be ever on your guard against him.

What kind of an enemy Satan is may be learned from the names and titles given to him in the Scriptures. The word of God never exaggerates anything, never raises a false alarm, nor seeks to excite fear unnecessarily. Our enemy is there called, "the god of this world," 2 Cor. iv. 4; "the prince of this world," John xii. 31; "ruler of the darkness of this world," Eph. vi. 12; "accuser of the brethren," Rev. xii. 10; "deceiver," Rev. xx. 10; "liar and murderer," John

viii. 44; and he is said to be "an adversary," 1 Peter v. 8. He is compared to "a roaring lion," a crafty serpent, and an artful fowler. From these and other Scriptures we may learn that our enemy is an intelligent being, one who possesses great powers of mind. That he is powerful, able to do fearful mischief, if permitted; as we see in the case of the patriarch Job. He is withal very patient and persevering; biding his time, returning again and again to the assault; trying various methods to accomplish his end. We are sure also that he has had much experience, having long studied the human heart and human history, and having had to do with all kinds of characters. We may be quite sure that Satan answers to the names given him in Scripture, and that whatever disguises he may assume, or whatever instruments he may employ, his designs are ever evil, in agreement with the malice and cruelty of his nature.

There are three special ways in which he displays his enmity. The first is deceiving in order to destroy. By deception, more than force, he has ever prevailed. Eve was "beguiled through his subtilty;" thus our race was ruined, and ever since he has been pursuing the same course. He deceives by lies, for he was, says our Lord, "a liar from the beginning." If he can persuade immortal souls to believe anything else in the place of God's word, he is sure to succeed. The great truth of that holy book is salvation only through the merits of Christ: against this Satan has raged more than against all besides, and the greater part of those who bear the Christian name are, it is to be feared, so deceived by him, that they rest their hopes for eternity either on superstitious observances or self-righteous deeds. Others, who admit the gospel way of salvation into their heads, do not "believe with the heart unto righteousness," nor prove their faith to be sincere by repentance and holiness. That such persons should rest satisfied while it is declared that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," proves that they believe Satan rather than God.

Satan shows his enmity in distressing in order to dismay. Those who are rescued from his grasp he will injure and distress as much as possible. He knows that it is their high privilege to be happy in God, and to rejoice in hope of his glory, and that God is glorified when this is the case. To hinder their joy, and interrupt their peace; to produce fears, despondency, and weakness; he accuses them to God; throws in fiery darts, and, perhaps, employs human instruments to trouble the mind.

He also decoys in order to degrade. Here he uses the world as a bait, and seeks by it to draw away the heart from Christ and heavenly things. He that tempted Christ to "fall down and worship him," holding out as a lure "the glory of this world," will be sure to try the same temptation with his followers; and, alas! we do not always say "Get thee hence, Satan," but sometimes listen and are ensnared, enter into temptation, and become degraded by wrong connexions, and lying vanities.

But why, some may ask, is Satan thus "my enemy?" what have I done to him that he should seek my destruction thus? Have you not an immortal soul? he wishes to ruin it eternally. Are you not placed within reach of blessings and glories, to which he can never hope to attain? On this account he envies you, and would fain keep you away from God and apart from Christ. Are you not God's creature, bound to serve and glorify him? and Satan hates God so thoroughly that he dislikes to see any one do this. And then if you, through rich grace, are a son of God, united to the Saviour, inhabited by the Holy Spirit, he knows that you will seek to injure his interests, to rob him of his subjects, and expose his devices, and he will treat you accordingly.

If these things are so, then how foolish it is to trifle with such a subject, or to speak lightly and jokingly of such an enemy. And it is equally foolish to deny the fact, because we cannot see the foe, nor tell how he carries on his temptations. We are sure it is so, because God has said it, and the history of the world proves it. The fact of our not being able to see this enemy makes the case more serious still. To have an enemy so cunning, so mighty, so experienced, and yet invisible, is a solemn thought indeed.

How dreadful, too, is the idea of being for ever associated with such a being. Can it be that any of our race who hear the gospel will also hear the solemn sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Alas! many will be found in this sad case. Let us earnestly embrace and constantly hold that gospel which is the "power of God unto salvation," delivering from the kingdom of darkness, and translating into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Let us, if we have realized this great change, make daily use of the promises of God, the offices of Christ, and the influences of the Holy Spirit. If Satan is an accuser, the Saviour is an advocate. If our enemy is a roaring lion—a crafty, venomous serpent—a lying deceiver—our great

Saviour is "the Lamb in the midst of the throne," possessed of infinite wisdom and power; he is a faithful friend, a skilful physician, "the faithful and true witness." Let us learn to set him over against all the power and rage of our enemy, and then we may rejoice in hope that we shall be "more than conquerors through him that loved us." Let us seek to be led by the Holy Spirit into all truth and holiness, so shall we be preserved from the wiles of the devil.

There is no doubt but that God has wise reasons for permitting this enemy of all goodness thus to go about, "seeking whom he may devour." This permission furnishes no excuse for wilful sin. Those who attend to Satan's suggestions, who neglect God's sayings, and are thus lured down to destruction, will be "without excuse;" while those who "overcome him through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony," will be crowned with honour. There is no doubt God will vindicate his own character; his wisdom will be seen in permitting Satan to war so long against holiness, and the whole universe will be instructed by the vindication.

But even now we may learn some lessons from the character and doings of our great enemy, and thus make him do us good against his will. We may learn how useless great powers of mind are without holiness. How much better moral beauty is than physical loveliness or mental splendour. Those who are only concerned about the last two, and are careless of the first, are in sympathy with Satan, and must perish with him if they persevere in their preference. But those who love holiness, and hate sin, shall live for ever in a world of light, and make such advances in knowledge as even Satan has no idea of.

We may learn also how awfully blinding and hindering is the power of sin. This wicked Spirit goes on persevering in evil, notwithstanding all his knowledge of what is to be the result. He continues fighting against God, though fully aware that it is finite struggling with Infinite. Still he carries on the hopeless contest, intent only on doing mischief, though it must return on his own head. Thus, also, many act who are deluded by him. They have proved that "sin is misery;" they are jaded, disappointed, worn out in sin's service; yet they try again, still hoping to gather "grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles." What will they do in the end thereof?

We may also learn from our enemy to occupy an appointed sphere of labour with care, and to diligently improve our time. Satan declared when questioned by the Almighty, that he came "from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up

and down in it ;" and we read in Rev. xii. 12, "Satan is come down, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Seeing, then, that "our adversary the devil" is ever diligent and in earnest, let us be "sober and vigilant," "always abounding in the work of the Lord ;" "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." And seeing that Satan and other evil spirits act in unison to do mischief, let all God's servants unite in every possible way to spread "the truth as it is in Jesus ;" and agree together earnestly to invoke the aid of their heavenly and almighty Friend, even the God of peace, who has promised "to bruise Satan under our feet shortly."

J. C.

"IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD."

Oh say not, "I will yet delay
To seek God's offered grace ;"
When Jesus, with a voice of love,
Says now, "Seek thou my face."

Say not, "When sickness lays me low
I will begin to pray ;"
For swift disease, or sudden death,
May call thy soul away.

Say not, "I'll choose religion's ways
When youthful joys are flown ;"
The heart which trifles now with sin
May then be hard as stone.

Say not, "I'll soon repent of sin,
And bow before God's throne ;"
The Spirit now may cease to strive,
May now let thee alone.

Say not, "To-morrow I will turn :"
To thee it may not come ;
For e'en this night thy soul may hear
Its everlasting doom.

But say, with earnestness and faith,
"Jesus, I come to thee ;
Now from this moment, by thy grace,
Help me from sin to flee.

Now for thy tender mercy's sake,
Forgive my past delay ;
And in thine own redeeming blood
Wash all my sins away.

Now by thy Holy Spirit's power,
Renew this heart of mine ;
And may the life which thou hast spared,
Be henceforth wholly thine."

D.



THE WOOD-RANGER'S HUT

"So you want another of grandpapa's stories this evening," said Mr. Morton to the group of young people who had drawn round his hearth. "Well, I must recall one to mind, and even now have recollected what may, I hope, be not wholly uninteresting, though without anything marvellous, as in my eastern adventures, and unadorned by descriptions of places and customs which you used to say made them quite poetical. The scene is nearer home, but the time some years back.

"Soon after my return from the east, I went to visit a friend in Ireland, determined to make the most of my stay in that country by learning something of the state of the people, especially with regard to religious knowledge. Close to his residence was a village, beautifully situated at the south side

APRIL, 1855.

D

of a hill, which so sheltered it from every sharp wind, that though it was very early in the season, I might say—

‘ Fair spring, the jocund queen of new-born flowers,
Bathed in light fragrant airs and sunny showers,
Was come already, and the grass was set
With violets, cowslips, daffodils, all wet
With freshest dew.

I liked to stroll about this pleasant hamlet, conversing with its inhabitants, whose courteous manners and warm feelings interested me so greatly that I was grieved to the heart to find them generally in gross ignorance of God’s truth ; and fervently prayed to him that he would be ‘ pleased to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ,’ Acts xxvi. 18.

“ My friend, who wished to show me everything worthy of observation, one fine morning proposed a ramble in a wood not far from the village, which, he said, was, by many, considered one of the most beautiful scenes in that part of the country. There was a narrow opening in the hill to the north of the village, by which we entered a valley that widened at each side as we proceeded, and was, with its inclosing hills, covered with fine old trees, the remains of one of the ancient forests once existing in this part of Ireland ; a bright rapid stream ran down through this glen, and altogether the place fully verified my friend’s announcement of its peculiar beauty, although I am not sufficiently clever at description to give a good idea of it.

“ We had proceeded about two miles up this romantic glen, when I perceived what, at first, seemed to be the ruins of some large building, but it was a rock rising perpendicularly near the brink of the water ; and its crags, covered with heath, ferns, and bushes of the vaccinium, or whortle-berry, might easily be mistaken for the ivy-covered turrets of an old castle. I stopped to admire what was, indeed, a very picturesque object.

“ ‘ This,’ said my friend, ‘ is Carrig-na-phooka, the rock of the fairies, who are said to inhabit a small cave which it contains.’

“ ‘ And are such superstitions still adhered to ?’ I inquired.

“ ‘ Yes,’ he answered, ‘ in remote places where civilization and education have not reached, but they are fast disappearing. The fairies, the pantheon of Irish demigods, are retiring, one by one, before the schoolmaster and civil engineer, to take

up their abode in wild lonely glens such as this, hiding in the gorgeous yellow furze or purple heath, from the approaching innovations which will, I hope, soon banish them for ever from our island.'

" 'May a knowledge of God's word be the means of dispelling these delusions,' I said, 'for that would substitute truth in their stead. But tell me, what is the popular belief concerning these fairies?'

" 'That they are beings who were once inhabitants of heaven, cast out for some transgression, and now actively employed in doing every mischief that they can to the human race.'

" 'Then,' said I, 'this Irish superstition is, like all that I have met with in other countries, founded on truth, the faint and distant echo of revelation.'

" 'We were now standing underneath the rock, when, issuing from the other side of it, we heard the sound of human voices; they were at times loud, as if in contention, and then we could discern something like lamentation or complaining. My friend started. 'Ha!' he exclaimed, 'I think I know what this means, and it has its origin in the superstitions concerning these same phóoka or fairies, whose power and malignity are even greater than those of the evil genii of the Arabian tales, which we used to read in our childhood. At the other side of this rock stands the wood-ranger's hut, and from its vicinity to the cave supposed to be the habitation of these supernatural beings, he and his family have ever been in peculiar dread of their assaults. He has a daughter who has had a delicate constitution from infancy, and this was attributed to the influence of the 'good people,' as they are usually called. Incantations were used, and fairy drinks administered with little effect, and no heathen rites that you have witnessed in distant lands could exceed in absurdity those practised here in the midst of a country called Christian.'

" 'Alas!' I cried, 'the name signifies little. The word of God, the only source of true Christianity, is shut up from your poor countrymen, 'for the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed,' Isa. ix. 16. Why do not we who have free access to that life-giving word, strain every nerve to disseminate it amongst them?'

" My friend continued: 'The child gradually recovered, and grew to be a nice little girl, when' my wife, who felt interested about her, got her into the service of a good lady, who lived at some distance. There she stayed two years, when

we heard that she had returned to her solitary home at the rock, in this wild wood, her health having again failed, and a change taken place in her in many ways, so that she would not even go to the priest for confession, nor accompany her family to mass; this was, as you may suppose, all attributed, by these deluded people, to her old tormentors, the fairies of Carrig-na-phooka. Persons supposed to be skilful in such matters, were consulted, and persuaded her parents that these malicious beings had actually carried off their daughter, substituting one of their own people, wearing her form, in her place. I was privately informed last night, that the old women who pronounced this verdict, were to meet here to-day, and use incantations for the purpose of driving away this impostor, and getting poor Katie brought back again, and no doubt the work is now going on where we hear the voices. Come on!

"I followed him round the base of the rock till we came to the wood-ranger's hut, outside which some people, chiefly old women, had assembled, and were seated on the grass. We stood near some thick underwood which completely concealed us from their view. A full description of the scene which we witnessed would be painful as a proof of the degraded state into which sin and ignorance may lead the human mind, even if related of some distant heathen nation, but doubly so when we hear it of a people so closely connected with ourselves. It made an indelible impression on my mind; but my account of it shall be brief.

"It seems that one plan arranged for getting rid of the fairy who was thought to personify Katie, was to starve her; and for the greater part of the preceding day and night, the poor girl had been left in her sick bed without food or drink, this being thought necessary to make the charms of rushes gathered near a holy well, sacred herbs, and other things which the old women were preparing, take effect. One woman alone was unemployed. She sat, pale and trembling, and occasionally the tears trickled down her cheek, which she wiped with her apron. We heard the voice of the young sufferer from the hut, calling out, 'Mother, dear, wont you give me one sup of water?' and this woman sprang to her feet as if about to comply with the request, but the others stopped her, and called out, as my friend translated for me, 'Not one drop of this water from the blessed well. Go back, old hag, to fairy-land, and send us our darling Katie once again.'*

* A fact, which came under the observation of the writer.

"But I am not to dwell upon the scene; indeed, before very long, my friend's patience failed, and he burst from our hiding-place into the midst of the group, upbraiding them with cruelty and folly, ordering them to disperse instantly, and assuring them that if a repetition of such doings ever occurred, he would punish every one concerned in it by law. In a few moments, all had disappeared except the girl's parents. The father, when accused for his share in the matter, declared that he had not much faith in these means for the restoration of his child, but that the women had insisted on using them, while the mother wept in silence.

"We entered the hut, and found the poor girl almost fainting from exhaustion. Some goat's milk was all that could be procured in the way of nourishment, of which we gave her a drink, and then returned home, promising to send more suitable restoratives. My friend's wife having prepared a small basket of such, I undertook to be the bearer of it. Having some medical skill, I thought it possible I might be useful to Katie, and my heart still more earnestly yearned to benefit the benighted souls of these poor people: so I returned to the fairies' rock.

"I had found one man in the village who could read Irish, to whom I had given a Bible in that language, and, at my request, he accompanied me. We found the sick girl rather better, and after administering some of the good things which I had brought, I recommended her lying down again, and joined the father, mother, and three or four brothers and sisters who were in the cottage, conversing with them freely, as they spoke tolerable English. A few questions elicited an account of the wicked inhabitants of the cave, and the mischief they had done in the neighbourhood, when the woman of the house, looking surprised, said, 'Sir, you do not laugh at us, nor get into a passion and call us fools, as the master does. Can it be that your honour believes in the fairies yourself?'

"'I believe, and on the best authority,' was my reply. 'that there are wicked spirits, once cast out of heaven, going about seeking to do us all the mischief they can,* worse than what you have been telling of injuring cows and spoiling the crops, even trying to turn us away from God, and make us disobey him, that we may, at last, be with them in hell.'

"They crossed themselves devoutly. 'Ohone!' exclaimed

Katie's father, 'if this be so, we are worse off even than we thought ourselves.'

"No, my good friends, you are better off, and I can show you how. We can know nothing of these things except from a book which God has given us. It is his own word, and I will tell you nothing but what I find in it. You will see how he sends his good angels to take care of those who fear him, and then no evil spirit can touch them.'

"At a sign from me, my companion opened the Bible at the 34th psalm, which I had marked. When the cottagers saw the book they looked uneasily at each other, but the moment they heard their native tongue, all suspicion was over. They listened with an expression of delight, and at the 7th verse, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them,' the wood-ranger exclaimed, 'True enough, what your honour said, God can send his angel to the poor man to deliver him.'

"'He can,' I replied, when the psalm was ended, 'and he has done wonderful things for us. Listen to this.' The 16th verse of John iii., 'God so loved the world,' etc., and a few of the following verses, were then read aloud. The effect upon these poor people was beyond describing. Low; but heartfelt exclamations burst from their lips, when suddenly, Katie sat up in her bed, and said, 'Father, mother, dear, it is the same good news, the very same good book that my mistress gave me when I learned that God only can forgive sins; and it was he, blessed be his name! and not fairies or wicked spirits, that put it into my heart to go by it in all things.'

"'If it is from God, it must be true, and we ought all go by it,' was her father's reply.

"'Go on with it, Mick Nolan, go on with it, anyhow,' cried the mother, and Luke's account of the Lord's death was read, till every one was in tears.

"There were few days during my sojourn in the neighbourhood, that I did not visit the wood-ranger's hut, accompanied by my reader, who soon seemed to partake of the deep interest in the book with which he was listened to. It pleased God to bless the means I used for Katie's recovery, and before I left, she was able to return to the service of her good mistress. So my story is ended, and may it influence you to do all you can towards supplying the poor Irish with the word of God."

E. F. G.

"PEACE AT THE LAST."

Not many weeks ago I stood, for the first time, beside a dying bed. I had looked on death before, for who has reached manhood or womanhood without being called to gaze upon the awful aspect of that universal visitant? But I had never watched the stealthy progress of his inroads, or spoken with one who stood face to face with him, in near expectation of the last great struggle. It was therefore with a new and solemn feeling that I entered the chamber of a dying girl who had expressed a wish to see me.

I had visited her in a former illness about twelve months before, and seen reason then to hope that the grace of God had fitted her for either life or death; a belief confirmed by everything I had since heard of her. For a while she recovered sufficiently to be able to return to her situation, but now, for two months, she had been again confined to her bed, suffering from a fearful disease which it was evident could only terminate in death. Incessant pain, rising at times to paroxysms of terrible agony, and only lulled at night by powerful opiates, had worn her almost to the appearance of a living skeleton, and it was the surprise of her medical attendant, as well as of all who saw her, that she could have lingered on so long. These particulars her mother told me on a previous visit, dwelling on Ellen's patient endurance and resignation with many tears.

When I entered the room a smile of grateful welcome lighted up the poor girl's wasted features, and the warm pressure of her thin white fingers, told almost more plainly than her whispered words that she was truly glad to see me. As soon as I was seated, she expressed in a few unobtrusive words her sorrow at hearing of a sudden and heavy bereavement I had recently sustained. I have often been struck with the extreme delicacy and refinement of feeling and manner which religion sometimes produces among the poor, but never more so than in this case. Ellen H— had been a servant of all work to a mistress as uneducated as herself; but in all my visits to her I never heard a word or an idea that would have ill become a Christian lady, and her delicate consideration for the feelings of others was such as many ladies might have studied with advantage.

She was unable to speak above a whisper, and a choking cough frequently compelled her to pause; but she answered all my questions calmly and without reserve. I have said

before that I believed her to be a Christian ; but knowing now how near she stood to that eternity where the stability of her hopes would be tried, I was most anxious to have clear testimony from her own lips that they rested on a sure foundation. After a little conversation, I began, therefore, by asking if she knew the physician's opinion of her state. She told me quietly that he said she could not last long ; adding, " I am willing to wait God's time." To another question, she replied that she was quite happy, and that no doubts or fears were ever permitted to disturb her mind.

There was an indescribable serenity about her whole manner, a look of settled peace on her emaciated countenance, which eloquently corroborated her words, and which, I knew, if rightly founded, could spring but from one source. I asked her, however, solemnly to tell me, as in the sight of God and the near prospect of eternity, on what her hopes of salvation rested. " On Jesus," was the brief and instant, but most comprehensive answer.

" Still, feeling anxious that no loose ideas or acquired phraseology of religion should mislead either her or me on so momentous a subject, I pressed it yet closer, asking, with the deepest and most solemn interest, whether she felt that her coming to him had been real and personal, such as to enable her to look forward without shrinking ; whether, casting away all other hope, she could meet the last struggle, and go forth into eternity, and stand alone before the throne of God without fear, looking to him ? It was an awfully momentous question ; one which I should scarcely have dared to put in all its naked force to one whose faith seemed feeble, or whose courage shaken ; but there was no hesitation, not a momentary tremor in her voice or look. Her answer was one never to be forgotten, so simple, yet so decisive was it : " I know that he will carry me through it all."

There was that in her manner which I cannot describe, but which carried to my mind the conviction I was seeking. The solemn thought I had suggested was evidently no new one to her. I felt that often in her long silent hours of pain and wakefulness, it must have risen before her, and been met and conquered till it became no longer startling ; she had triumphed over it in Jesus. In quietness and assurance she was resting on his righteousness, and its work on her soul was peace.

I sat a little longer with her, speaking of him and of his mercies, while her glistening eyes and feeble utterance told

the adoration of which her heart seemed full; and then I left her, promising soon to come again.

On my next visit, two days afterwards, I was surprised to find her to all appearance better. Her voice was less feeble, and there was even a degree of brightness and animation, like that of health, about her manner. I took her some flowers, of which she was very fond, and she held them in her hand, inhaling their fragrance, and drinking in their beauty with the deep, almost tearful, appreciation which it needs a long confinement to a sick room fully to bestow.

I spoke to her of Him who clothed the earth with these fair witnesses for his power and love, of his minute and tender watchfulness over his redeemed ones, and of the glorious home he had prepared, to which she was now hastening; and she lay and listened with a countenance radiant with interest and joy, her brief remarks showing the undoubting faith with which she rested on his promises. I then read to her part of the closing chapter of Baxter's "Saint's Rest," which she seemed thoroughly to enjoy, and finished with the 14th chapter of John's gospel—those precious parting words of Jesus which have cheered the hearts of thousands of his dying people, and lighted up the dark valley with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

She thanked me with warm and repeated expressions of gratitude, and I soon after left her, bearing with me an impression that, I think, no years will ever efface, of the peace with which the religion of Jesus can soothe a dying bed. I had often read of it, often heard of it, but the bright and holy calm of that wasted face, and the meek assurance of the feeble, but unfaltering voice, was beyond even my imagination. A holy, deep serenity breathed in every word and look, unlike to anything on earth, except perhaps the all-absorbing peace and adoration of a soul newly brought to rejoice in the light of God.

The next day but one I went again. My visit was unavoidably delayed till evening, and when I reached her house I had to wait some time before I could see her. Her mother told me that she had been fearfully worse since I last saw her, and was then having a little rest. Symptoms which told unmistakably of approaching death had appeared, and her sufferings, for about six hours that afternoon, had been most agonizing. Now, for about half-an-hour, she had had an interval of ease, and her mother expressed a wish that I should wait and see her, as it might probably be the last time.

It was growing almost dusk when at length I anxiously ascended the narrow stairs, and entered her little room. The usual smile of welcome greeted me, but I could not catch her first feeble words. Bending over her to listen, the perfume of the fresh flowers I had brought attracted her notice, and she thanked me for having again remembered them. I held them near to her, for she was too weak to lift up her hand, and she dwelt on their beauty with the same look of earnest admiration which I had before remarked. I felt that it was not the mere earthly loveliness of the flowers that filled her mind; and, half to myself and half to her, I said in a low voice, "His flowers." She caught the words in a moment, as if they were the echo of what was passing in her mind, and repeated with deep and evident feeling, "His flowers."

I said, "I hear that there is another messenger come to tell you that you are near your home." She smiled faintly and assented, adding, as she had done before, "I am willing to wait his time." "Does any doubt or fear," I inquired, "trouble you now in the prospect of the end?" "No, none," was the whispered answer; "I have peace." "Is there any word of God in which you find especial comfort?" She began to quote a text, but her voice failed; after a short pause, she whispered, "He will send the Comforter." I said a few words of the Saviour's promised presence to the end, and then took leave of her as for the last time, for she was evidently too weak to bear more conversation. I had indeed only been able to catch the preceding answers by putting my head close to her.

She held my hand for a minute or two, thanking me earnestly for my visit; and I said, "It seems scarcely likely that you will be here to-morrow, but I will come and see." She thanked me again, and said very calmly, "If not, we shall meet again;" and so we parted.

These were almost the last words she spoke. She slept till about three o'clock the following morning, and then had an interval of intense suffering, followed by stupor throughout the day. I went to see her as I had promised; but she was quite insensible, and about nine o'clock that evening her happy spirit was released from the suffering body, and she entered into rest.

Very deep and solemn was the impression which the events of that week left upon my mind. We read of peaceful death-beds, and we feel that, to one who trusts in Jesus, death can and ought to have no sting; but the sight of such a closing scene as this brings new and triumphant corroboration of the

truth. In our days of health and strength, and when the sunshine of God's countenance is beaming over us, we may feel and profess to feel no fear of death; but the answer comes readily to an unbeliever's lips, and may even be presented to our own coward hearts, "It is all very well now, but how will this trust hold out when you come, perhaps after long and depressing sickness, face to face with death and with eternity?" Here was a convincing reply, a great and triumphant fact. Amidst extraordinary and protracted suffering, the religion of Jesus *was* sufficient to keep this poor girl's mind in perfect peace; to enable her to make that mysterious and fearful passage which no philosophy could ever smoothe or brighten, without even a momentary cloud of fear. By the grace of God she had embraced it before the time of trial came, and in that hour she found it all sufficient.

Reader, the time is coming when all earthly props shall fail you: have you an interest in this Jesus and his great salvation?

A. U.

THE GALLEY SLAVE.

To "work like a galley slave," is an adage in common use, to denote a very distressing degree of labour; still we doubt if those who thus apply it are always aware of the full force of the expression, or have much idea of what such a person endures, there being no galleys and no slaves in our favoured land. Neither, perhaps, is it generally remembered that the persecuting genius of the Romish church has often availed itself of the barbarous system of galley slavery for the purpose of forcing the Lord's people to give up gospel truth, and embrace popish error.

In these times, so remarkable for papal innovation and Protestant concession, the mind cannot be too strongly impressed with the undeniable fact that the spirit of persecution reigns as powerfully as ever in the church of Rome, and that where she does not exercise it we may be sure she wants the power, not the will. The fearful nature of that spirit is so well illustrated in the narrative of the sufferings of Isaac Le Febvre,* a French Protestant, condemned to the galleys for no crime but his profession of the truth, that we shall give a short account of what he endured here. It is a gloomy picture to present to our readers, but not without its bright side, as it

* Narrative of the sufferings of M. Isaac Le Febvre, translated by the Rev. J. N. Pearson.

also displays the patience and fortitude manifested by a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is well known that the edict of Nantes, granted by Henry iv. of France, securing toleration to his Protestant subjects, was repealed by Louis xiv. in the year 1685. From that time they were subjected to dreadful persecutions, of which Le Febvre's history is a sample.

He was arrested in February 1686, while trying to escape into Switzerland, and sent to Besançon, where he was stripped of everything in his possession, fettered, and in every way ill-treated. After a sojourn of three weeks in prison, he was put on trial, and, as he could not be induced to abjure his faith, condemned to serve for life as a slave on board the galleys. Before this sentence was executed, he was kept for several weeks in close confinement, and thus describes the treatment he met with in his dungeon. "Nothing can exceed the cruelty I receive. The weaker I become, the more they endeavour to aggravate the miseries of the prison. No one has been allowed to enter it; and if one spot could be found where the air was more infected than another, I was placed there. Yet the love of the truth prevails in my soul, for God, who knows my heart, and the purity of my motives, supports me by his grace."

After a journey, during which he was loaded with fetters, and placed in a wagon in a very painful posture, being much hurt by the pressure of his fellow-travellers upon him, he was at length sent with other prisoners to the galleys. Separated from a dear Christian friend, who was also a martyr to the truth, Le Febvre was placed on board the galley without the least regard to his being an invalid and wholly without strength. The physician represented his case to the intendant, but without effect. The poor sufferer writes thus: "I came on board yesterday, and was immediately loaded with chains. We are pitied. An officer observed to me, that if we were here for our crimes, we might expect all sorts of indulgences. . . . I am made to lie upon a board a little more than two feet wide, and am allowed no covering. . . . This is a fiery trial, but though God slay me, yet will I trust him."

That our readers may be able to form some estimate of the horrors of a galley, and of the faith which could thus support a sufferer under them, we transcribe a description of one given by a Roman Catholic priest. "A galley is a long, flat, one-decked vessel. At the stern there is a cabin belonging to the captain, and solely his at night, or in foul weather, but in the daytime common to the officers and chaplain; all the rest of

the crew, except the under-officers, who retire to other convenient places, are exposed above-deck to the scorching heat of the sun by day, and to the cold and damp by night. In the hold there is a close dark room; at each end of this room there is a sort of scaffold, called taular, on which the sick are laid promiscuously, without beds, or anything under them. When these scaffolds are full, all other sick men are stretched along the cables. The whole space between the ceiling and the taular is but three feet; and when the duties of my station called me in among them to confess, advise, or administer comfort, I was obliged to lie down and stretch myself along their sides to hear their confessions, and often, when I was confessing one, another expired by my side. This place is so dreadful, that a slave, though ever so weak, will rather choose to tug at the oar and expire under his chain, than retire to this loathsome hospital. . . . There are five slaves to every oar. The fatigue of tugging at the oar is extraordinary; they must rise to draw their stroke, and fall back again, inso-much that the perspiration trickles down their harassed limbs. For fear they should fail through weakness, three officers are posted, who, whenever they find that an oar does not keep time with the rest, mercilessly exercise a tough wand on the man they suspect; and as they are uncovered when they row, each stroke imprints evident marks of the instrument of the executioner.

"In the year 1703, several Protestants out of Languedoc, were put on board our galley. I was astonished on Sunday morning, after saying mass, to hear an officer say he was going to give the Huguenots the bastinado, because they did not kneel, nor show respect to the mass. The very name of bastinado terrified me, and I begged the officer to forbear till the next Sunday, that I might, in the meantime, endeavour to convince them of, what I thought, their duty. . . . The dreadful day being come, the officer narrowly observed them; only two out of twenty bowed the knee to Baal, the rest boldly refused, and were served in the following manner. The chains were taken off, and each man placed in the hands of four Turks, who, having stripped them, and stretched them on the coursier (the great gun), they were there so held that they could not so much as stir, during which time there was a fearful silence throughout the galley. Then the executioner, with a knotty rope's end, mercilessly beat the poor wretches. After the skin was flayed off their flesh, the only balsam that was applied was a mixture of vinegar and salt; they were

then thrown into the hospital in the hold. I went thither, and could not refrain from tears at the sight of so much barbarity. . . . It was wonderful to see with what true Christian patience they bore their torments, never expressing anything like rage in the extremity of their pain, but calling upon Almighty God, and imploring his assistance."

We are glad to inform our readers that God, who can bring good out of evil, made these dreadful scenes the means of leading the Roman Catholic priest who describes them, to renounce papal error, and receive Christian truth. He thus writes: "I visited them day by day, and as often as I did so, my conscience upbraided me for persisting so long in a religion which inspired such cruelty, a temper directly opposed to the spirit of Christianity. At last their wounds, like so many mouths preaching to me, made me fully sensible of my error, and experimentally taught me the excellence of the Protestant religion."*

Le Febvre was at length removed from the galley, but only to be immured in a damp and miserable dungeon, where he lingered for fifteen years, when the Lord was pleased to terminate his sufferings, and take him to himself.

Dear reader, Tuscany has shown that the persecuting spirit of the papacy still afflicts the Lord's people wherever the church of Rome has power. Shall not we, then, whom the truth has made free, be valiant for that truth in the strength of our Lord? Shall we not shun every approach to the errors which lead to such horrors; while, at the same time, we pity, pray for, and use every means in our power to deliver, those who are bound by that bond of iniquity, that strong delusion which so often has caused them to stain their hands "with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

G.

LESSONS FROM WAR.

FALSE RUMOURS, AND A FAITHFUL RECORD.

THE Saviour foretold that there would be "wars, and rumours of wars," and the same fearful fact is predicted by many of the prophets, and by the last New Testament seer, the apostle John. But beyond all these scenes of confusion and misery, arising from the "lusts which war in men's members," we have exhibited the Saviour's glorious reign of universal and

* Bion's account of the sufferings of Protestants on board the galleys.

permanent peace, when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." As history has hitherto proved the truth of the former predictions, and thus verified God's awful threatenings, we may be fully persuaded that the many prophecies of the peaceable kingdom shall be accomplished; "for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it," and "the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

"But we see not yet all things put under Him." War is yet raging; men are still learning the fearful art of mutual destruction, and a time of war is pre-eminently a time of rumours. Two or more nations engage in deadly strife, and frequently adjoining kingdoms, or nations connected in some way with the contending parties, are drawn into the conflict. The conflagration spreads; men wonder where it will end; "then hearts begin to fail for fear," and strange forebodings are felt even in the strongest minds.

Such events and feelings give birth to various reports, and places far from the scene of conflict furnish rumours. Tales of defeat, or tidings of victory, are fabricated, and nations are thrown into a panic, or excited to an ecstasy, by reports for which there is not the least foundation. A notable instance of this has occurred during the present war, when the fall of Sebastopol was so confidently reported, and so extensively believed. But such baseless rumours are soon contradicted; in a few days dispatches from the seat of war are received; eye-witnesses and generals send a faithful report, and then people wonder how they could so easily be deceived by that which they now see was self-contradictory and absurd. All perceive that the false news was fabricated by interested persons, for selfish ends, or else by enemies, to mislead, and so serve their own cause.

Thus it is also in the spiritual war. False rumours concerning it are very prevalent; many are dismayed, and some misled by them; but while all this is going on, a faithful record is being written by One who sees all that is taking place, who can make no mistake, who never forgets any event or circumstance, and who is "the faithful and true witness."

Let us notice some of these flying reports and false rumours. There is the infidel statement that the battle of truth is nearly lost, and that soon the victory will be gained by the enemies of the Bible. This has been circulated so long, and in such various forms that it cannot be called "news;" it is an old falsehood produced by "the father of lies," who knows it is

false ; but it is promulgated by those who say what they wish, and who aim to fulfil their own evil desires. Truth cannot die ; those who predict its decease must be found false prophets ; Christianity is immortal, and those who prepare a grave for it will fall into the pit which they have made. Many ages ago a persecuting emperor ordered pillars to be erected, and inscriptions in letters of brass to be placed upon them, reporting that in such a year the Christian heresy was extirpated. This boasting emperor passed away like a dream, his pillars are fallen, and time has eaten out his impious inscription ; but Christianity still lives to bless mankind.

In the last century, Voltaire and his associates boasted that in fifty years they would banish the Christian religion from the civilized world. Within a few years of his uttering these vain words, the various noble societies which distinguish modern times sprang into existence, and soon after his death, the very press which had been employed to circulate his blasphemies, was engaged in printing Bibles. In our own day also one of the world's poets has sung :—

“ Ring out a slowly dying cause,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.”

If people will mistake a waxing moon for a waning one, and stoutly maintain that the rising tide is retreating, and will still do so with facts and proofs to the contrary staring them in the face, we can only pity their delusion, and rejoice in those facts which they deny. Christianity is, they say, “ the slowly dying cause.” Why, real Christianity is the life of Christ in the human soul ; and how can life, the life of Christ, die ? “ The Christ that is to be,” as is said, is doubtless such a one as the Jews of old looked for,—one of whom our Lord declared, “ if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” But we have a Saviour now. The true Messiah is with us. We want no other, for he is “ our All and in all.” “ And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life,” 1 John v. 20.

But while the infidel declares that the battle is all but lost, the worldling asserts that it is quite an unnecessary conflict ; that it should never have been entered upon ; and that it had better be at once relinquished. Why should we crucify “ the flesh with the affections and lusts ?” Has not God given us all things richly to enjoy ? Why require renouncement of the world, and nonconformity to it ? Cannot we go to heaven

after enjoying ourselves here? Surely such pleaders strangely forget that we can never truly enjoy that which enslaves us; that the soul cannot be filled with earthly good; that God has said, "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God;" and that none can enter heaven who are not trained and educated for it while on earth. But alas! such advocates of a false peace-policy have many to listen to them, and are thus lulled into a fatal dream of security.

There are others who say that the conflict is necessary, that man needs to be elevated above his present degraded condition, and that such an object is worthy of all the energy that can be laid out upon it; but that the war against ignorance and sensuality must be carried on with some other weapons, and that new methods of attack must be resorted to. If we inquire respecting these new modes of warfare, the answers are very contradictory; and if all the methods recommended were adopted, they would surely neutralize each other. Some recommend ceremonies and forms, and others philosophy. One would assail the senses, and another the intellect; but all agree to leave conscience alone; not to summon the human will to instant submission; not to require the affections to pay cordial homage to infinite excellence. This is just as Satan wishes it. If man's will remains rebellious, if his conscience still slumbers, if his affections are alienated from God, he cares not how many notions fill his head, or how many ceremonies employ his hands and tongue. We prefer that old method of warfare which Peter adopted on the day of Pentecost; which Paul found "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;" which was "the power of God unto salvation" to the proud Roman; which was the means of liberating the enslaved Corinthians, and which, since those glorious times of successful warfare, has in all ages been more than a match for the prince of darkness; which has robbed him of his slaves; and which is destined to "draw all men" unto him who is the "Captain of salvation," and the "Prince of peace."

Besides those rumours from avowed enemies and false friends, there are others from faint hearts and gloomy minds, who, looking only at one part of the conflict, or judging of the campaign from a single battle, or even skirmish, are ever ready to anticipate evil, and to discourage the hearts of the soldiers of the cross. Nor must we forget to mention that evil may be done by the over-sanguine, as well as by the desponding. It is well to be hopeful; "but hope must have reason." It is right to boast of our good cause, and to rejoice in ultimate

success; but we must not boast as those that put off the harness. The church must triumph in the end, but there may be partial defeats through imprudence and unwatchfulness; and a whole army may be clothed in mourning through the conduct of one Achan. The dangers to which we are exposed, the weakness of which we are the subjects, the resources and power of our enemies, are not false rumours, but solemn facts, which we should so believe as to cherish more than ever a simple dependence on the Holy Spirit, and habits of watchfulness and prayer.

Let all the soldiers of Christ test by "the law and testimony" the various rumours which reach them. Reported telegraphic despatches come from the seat of war; we have no means of testing, and therefore we are obliged to wait awhile, or run the risk of being deceived. But it is not so in the other case. Men may say this or the other, may recommend a certain course, or predict a failure; but "what saith the Scripture?" In the infallible word we have descriptions, directions, predictions respecting the heavenly war, applicable to all ages. He who meditates on, prays over, and confides in that blessed book, shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for "his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." He will do as Hezekiah did, who took the threatening letter of Rabshakeh, and spread it before the Lord, Isaiah xxxvii. 14; and like him he will obtain answers of peace, and a great deliverance from the God who heareth and answereth prayer. Like Nehemiah, who, when message after message, and rumour upon rumour reached him, only cried the more earnestly, "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands," Neh. vi. 9; so the true-hearted Christian soldier will take the weapon of "all-prayer," and, looking to the God of salvation, will obtain such supplies of the Holy Spirit as shall feed his courage and ensure him the victory.

Respecting "the faithful record" which is being made of the great spiritual conflict, we will only observe that there is one very solemn question which all will do well to ponder. What estimate will be formed of us, and how shall we feel when our "glorious leader" shall read over an account of the whole campaign? Yes, the battle of life will soon end with each of us; and the great conflict between good and evil, truth and error, Satan and Christ, as regards this world, must some day be also finished. All the combatants will then be assembled to hear the faithful record read. There will be no flying reports, no unfounded rumours, to engage men's atten-

tion then. Truth will come out most clearly. Then will be seen who has been fighting against God, and who has been warring under Christ. Then the enemies of the cross of Christ will perish. The coward will be branded with eternal infamy, and the overcomer crowned with eternal glory. Let all who would be overcomers study well God's description of those who were once in the conflict: "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;" and listen reverently to the words of Christ: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." J. C.

SHELTER AND PRESERVATION.

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF A CLERGYMAN, RELATED BY HIMSELF.

"BEING on my way to visit a friend, a minister in the country, I was brought, after an interval of fifteen years, into the neighbourhood of the village in which I had commenced my ministerial labours. I longed to revisit a scene in which, in the ardour of my first love, I had, in season and out of season, preached Christ to my flock, showing them that there was no other name given among men whereby they could be saved. The ministry of reconciliation was committed to me, and I prayed them in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. The Saviour was held up to their view; they heard the voice, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," and many, drawn by the Holy Spirit, looked with the eye of faith, and were saved. To renew my intercourse with these was my great desire, though, doubtless, many, during the time of my absence, had gone to their heavenly rest.

"Though the weather was fine when I started on horseback, yet I had not proceeded far, before the bright sun was obscured by threatening clouds, which foreboded an approaching storm. My road lay through wide extending marshes, surrounded by deep ditches, and no spreading foliage was near to offer me shelter, nor any friendly shed to which I could retreat in case I were overtaken in the storm I apprehended. Just as I was yielding to despair, a cottage rose unexpectedly before me, and hope reviving, I urged on my steed and hastened thither, trusting it might be inhabited by some one who would have compassion on me and my horse.

"On my approach, a woman came out, whose countenance, though furrowed by age, I recognised as one of those whom I had formerly hoped would prove my crown of rejoicing in the

great day of the Lord's appearing. I soon perceived I was a stranger to her, and on my requesting shelter, she replied that she had no accommodation for me, but that at an inn two miles off, I should find all I required.

"Without repeating my desire, I remarked that, though poor in this world, I trusted she was rich in faith, and an heir of a heavenly inheritance, and that secluded as she was from the rest of mankind, she had an Almighty Friend with whom she could hold sweet communion.

"With a countenance illumined with heavenly light, as if a chord had been touched in her heart, she meekly replied, 'Alas ! sir, these are hard times, and many's the burden we poor old folks have to bear ; but, as you say, 'tis a comfort to have a Friend always near us, who helps us to bear all, and who, I tell my old man, 'will never leave us nor forsake us,' till he carries us with our grey hairs to his heavenly kingdom.'

"'How long,' I said, 'have you been taught those blessed truths which you appear to realize? for truly it is only when we can look upon God as our reconciled Father in Christ, that we can cheerfully bear the burden and heat of the daily trials of life. You must have a valued friend in your pastor.'

"She replied, 'I and my master go to yonder church, because we can there join in prayer, and hear God's word ; but we have little light given us, and sad is the ignorance and wickedness in these parts. Some fifteen years ago, we had a faithful guide ; he taught us poor souls the way to heaven, and much was the good he did amongst us. Then we looked forward to the sabbath, not only as a day of rest, but as one of heartfelt enjoyment. We forgot all our troubles as the Sunday came on, because we were sure to hear words of comfort and encouragement which we poor creatures so much wanted. But, after a time, he was sent for to labour in another part of the Lord's vineyard, and we have never heard anything of him since.'

"'You must have missed him,' I said. 'Would it give you much pleasure to see him again?'

"'It would indeed cheer our poor old souls to speak to him once more before we die ; but, sir ! surely I know your voice ; it is indeed our long-lost friend. Come out, John, and shake hands with Mr. R—, who is come so far to see us.'

"The old man came forward, and with both hands, gave me a hearty welcome. 'Come in,' said he, 'thou man of God, and share with us our humble fare. It does our old

hearts good to see you once more: we'll put your horse up, too, for there's a storm coming on fast.'

"I cheerfully accepted his invitation, and was not a little pleased to find myself under shelter. The rain soon fell in torrents, the thunder resounded in the heavens, and the forked lightning flashed from side to side; but we felt ourselves safe in the protecting arms of the Almighty. He was our 'sun and shield,' and we could feel calm amidst the turmoil of the warring elements; for while those who love darkness rather than light are filled with fear and dismay, even at the rustling of a leaf, the dissolving of the whole framework of nature cannot disturb the peace of those who are resting calmly on the sovereign will of a covenant God. We beguiled the time by talking of the dealings of God with us during the years that had passed since we last met.

"The cottage being situated in a retired place, several peasants, drenched with rain, asked admittance, and sought comfort from the bright wood fire blazing on the hearth. I endeavoured to turn the occasion to profit by reading and explaining a portion of the word of God, trusting that a word in season might reach the heart of some poor wanderer, and be made, by the Spirit of God, effectual to his salvation. Amongst the group, there was a woman who particularly struck my attention, and who appeared thoughtful, and as if struggling with some strong emotion; and while we were bowing our knees in prayer, remembering that when two or three meet in the name of Christ, he is 'in the midst of them,' she showed much emotion. When the service was over, she approached me, and said in a trembling voice, 'Surely, sir, the gracious God has led my steps within this day, for I had determined to destroy myself to-night, thinking thus to put an end to all my misery. I have been turned out of doors in this storm by a cruel husband, and thus, without a home, I determined to seek rest in the grave. But you, sir, have told us that hell is the portion of the wicked, and that the grave can offer no rest to them. Can there be mercy for me—for me, a poor miserable sinner? tell me if I may hope; or must I be wretched here, and miserable throughout eternity?'

"I reminded her of that blood which cleanseth from all sin, and pointed to the Saviour who came to seek and to save that which was lost, telling her of his gracious words, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' Matt. xi. 28.

"She replied, with earnestness, 'Thank God who led me

here, and thus has prevented me from rushing into his presence with all my sins unrepented of; most justly must hell have been my portion. Now I would humbly seek for pardon at the foot of the cross, and look to God for support under all my heavy afflictions; and then, when a few more days of weariness have passed, my Saviour will take me to himself.

"I advised her to return home, and strive, by patience and meekness, to show what the grace of God could enable her to bear. I encouraged her with the hope that by such conduct, accompanied by earnest prayer, perhaps it might please God to change her husband's heart, and then she would be amply rewarded for her present forbearance. The shade of sorrow passed from her countenance, and it became enlightened by hope. At parting, she said with warmth, 'Never, never shall I forget him in my prayers who has pointed out to me the way of peace; and may you, sir, in carrying the message of salvation to lost sinners, be made the means of bringing many into the fold of Christ.'

"She left the cottage, and I could not help wondering at the power of that gospel which is so effectual in the salvation of mankind. As in the case of Lydia, the Spirit of God had opened the heart of this poor wanderer; she had heard his gentle voice, and it had spoken peace to her soul. Infinite Wisdom had led this poor blind woman by a way she knew not, and it had conducted to a safe refuge. I could only exclaim with the apostle, 'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unspeakable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' Rom. xi. 33.

"The tempest had now passed off, and I was reminded by the hour, that it was time to take leave of my kind host and hostess. We bade each other farewell, not expecting to meet again on earth, but looking forward to that happy period when, assembled around the throne, we should join in the song, 'Salvation to our God, and unto the Lamb.' And what were my feelings at this moment? Did I wish to seek great things for myself? No; the Lord had bestowed on me abundant honour, and my one desire was henceforth to spend and be spent in his service. Truly happy are they who are made instrumental in turning one poor sinner 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;' and the prophet Daniel pronounces them blessed who 'turn many to righteousness,' for they shall shine 'as the stars for ever and ever,' Dan. xii. 3."

What encouragement does the foregoing authentic narrative give, both to the believer and to the minister of the gospel of the grace of God. The everlasting love of a covenant God often guides his people through rough paths, that he may perform his purposes of love to them. They are engraven on the palms of his hands, and their names are ever before him. Like Israel, the Lord may sift the nations "as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth," Amos ix. 9. The chosen of the Lord will be effectually called, they will hear his voice and live. And surely the minister of God may take courage, speaking his word in season and out of season, feeling it his privilege, like the apostle, to preach it in faith and much assurance, knowing "it shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto he sent it," Isa. lv. 11.

W. S.

A DISTRICT VISITOR'S NOTE-BOOK.

THERE is one incident of frequent occurrence in the experience of a district visitor, which ought always to awaken her anxious interest and call forth her earnest prayers. It is when sickness, or any other bodily infirmity interrupts the busy mother in her household cares, or brings down the father's strength, or confines the thoughtless and giddy youth to a bed of pain. At such times the voice of God speaks to the heart; and it is for the Christian friend and helper to endeavour by a kind, but solemn address, by serious personal admonition, by all that warning and intreaty can do, to be indeed a "worker together with Him."

The hymn or the chapter learned at the Sunday-school, a text, or a few striking words from some long-forgotten sermon, returns to the mind in the stillness of the sick room, and may be blessed by the Holy Spirit to the turning of the sinner from his evil ways. Such indications must be watched for and laid hold of with secret prayer; and often it will be found that a chord has been struck which finds an answer in the heart, and gives access to that inner world of thought and feeling which the poor, no less than others, instinctively keep hidden from the stranger's eye. Much to encourage, much also to sadden and depress, such seasons will bring to our knowledge. Sometimes, we are ready to hope, nay, to believe, that an abiding impression has been made: sometimes we have the grief of seeing that every good resolution seems to have been left

behind in the sick chamber, and that returning health is only the forerunner of a return to sin.

I have noted down some of the cases which first taught me neither to hope too much, nor entirely to despair of good resulting from this salutary discipline of the Father's hand. I record them here, not because they will bring to the reader's notice any character or incident of more than everyday interest, but because from the very absence of unusual interest, I know that such persons and such occurrences must be familiar to every district visitor; and some one, perhaps, in reading of my hopes and disappointments, will trace the resemblance to her own.

I was making a few calls in my district one morning, when I saw an elderly woman, a stranger, standing at a cottage door, and evidently awaiting my approach. I had just heard of the sudden and dangerous illness of Mrs. Shepperley, the occupier of the house, and was glad to find that she had expressed a wish to see me; so after making a few inquiries respecting the nature of her attack, I went up to the clean, though scantily furnished chamber in which she lay. Every object I saw was in accordance with the little that I knew of her character. She was a quiet, industrious woman, by no means addicted to "gossiping," and with something in her manner that might have been almost called refinement. So the room was tidily arranged; a well-mended patchwork quilt lay upon the bed; and against the wall, on nails placed there for the purpose, hung the Sunday gown and bonnet, and the husband's coat, covered up from the dust with an old handkerchief or shawl. Mrs. Shepperley lay with flushed face and eager eye, turning from side to side with a moan of pain; but she held out her hand when she saw me, begged me to remain, assured me that she was well enough to listen; and when I said a few earnest words about the soul, and that eternal world which seemed so near, large silent tears rolled down her feverish cheeks, and she appeared deeply sensible of the solemn truths which I sought to bring before her.

I did not think it desirable to remain long, as quietness was clearly of the utmost importance; but before I left I read to her the parable of the prodigal son, and in compliance with her request turned down the leaf of her own Testament at the place. When I went to see her next day, she was somewhat better; the remedies applied had been effectual, and she was able to tell me that her minister had visited and prayed with her, and by her desire had again read to her the chapter in

St. Luke, and explained it to her more fully. Then she told me of her early training at the Sunday-school; how that parable had been familiar to her there; of the good habits that she had retained until her marriage; the carelessness and worldliness that had become habitual to her since; of the trials which God had sent to bring her to himself, the sickness, the loss of all her children, one by one; the poverty which had overtaken her: all seemed to be confided to me from the fullness of her heart. And as I visited her, day after day, through her slow recovery, and tried to instruct her after my power, and to strengthen her purposes of amendment, I did hope—perhaps too confidently—that she had “passed from death unto life,” and would henceforth seek with humble diligence to walk in God’s holy ways.

Our minister also visited her constantly, with solemn warnings, and kind intreaties, and fervent prayers. He urged her to show her thankfulness for the special mercy she had received, by renewing her attendance at the long-forsaken house of God; and finding she had no prayer-book, he gave her one with a clear, large print, in which she asked me to inscribe her own and the donor’s name. How often was that book used by her in the public worship of God? Alas! she went but once—on the first Sunday after her perfect recovery. Once only, on that bright summer sabbath; and never again, nor to any other place of worship, so far as I know, while she remained in the neighbourhood. A few months afterwards, I observed that her house was closed; and I found upon inquiry that she and her husband had removed to a village at some distance. I felt a moment’s surprise that she had not given me a word of farewell; but immediately the thought followed, that one who could so lightly regard the mercy and long-suffering of God, was not likely to retain any warm remembrance of the good will of an earthly friend.

It was about the same time, or shortly afterwards, that Mrs. Haywood, a neighbour and acquaintance of Mrs. Shepperley’s, was taken ill. She was a young woman whom I had first known in deep poverty, and whom I respected for the self-denying honesty of her character. She was possessed of much natural intelligence, but unaided by education, as she could not even read. This circumstance had made me doubly earnest in urging her to frequent the house of God, though all my persuasions could only induce her occasional attendance; and now that she was threatened by dangerous disease, I felt much fear on her account, and discouraging sense of

my own insufficiency. Reading and conversation seemed means so inadequate; and I did not rely as I ought to have done on the assurance that our "sufficiency is of God."

Yet I soon found much to awaken hope in my visits to her sick room. She had occasionally attended the faithful preaching of the word; and one sermon, which I well remembered, had made a deep impression upon her mind. I trust the last great day may prove that it was also written by the power of the Holy Spirit upon her heart. The text had been that verse from St. Peter, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Her conscience had been awakened by the plain emphatic manner in which the unconverted sinner had been warned that those who do not love the unseen Saviour here, will never be admitted to see him hereafter in his heavenly kingdom; and she again and again repeated the short, striking sentences inprinted upon her memory, and which she said had never since that day been long absent from her thoughts. I was thankful for this opening; and gladly availing myself of it, I found in all my subsequent visits that the idea lost none of its force, but was even the welcome introduction to serious remark, of which she rarely failed to make close, personal application. Why should I doubt that the gracious Saviour, though unseen, was leading this poor ignorant woman by a way that she knew not, to love him who had first loved and given himself for her? She made no promises; she spoke of no resolutions: but after her recovery she was constant in her attendance at church; she also made a sacrifice which I could never prevail upon her to make before, by sending her child to school, though her little services were valuable at home; and there was not a cottage in my district where I met with a kindlier welcome, or found the word of advice more humbly and thankfully received.

There is a house of some comparative pretension in the more respectable part of my district, occupied by a widow, named Allanby, the mother of three grown-up sons, who live with her, and whose united earnings provide her with a comfortable maintenance. I knew but little of her character and history, for though voluble and communicative in the extreme, there was an indefinable something in her manner which repelled me, in spite of all the promptings of duty and every previous resolution. One day, in passing, I heard that this person was dangerously ill. She had expressed no wish to see me; but when I called to inquire after her, she sent a

message downstairs, begging me to come again next day, when she hoped to be in less pain: though her daughter, who was come home to nurse her, added that it did not seem likely she would live through the night.

In this, however, the daughter was mistaken. When I called on the following morning, I found that Mrs. Allanby was better; and I was shown into the small, neat chamber where she lay, propped up with pillows, and surrounded with humble comforts; an open prayer-book lying upon the counterpane within reach, and a large Bible on the chair by her bedside. She was evidently not so ill as I had been led to suppose. As soon as I had taken my seat, she began to speak of her present affliction in that peculiar strain which seems to make a merit of submission to the will of God; and then by degrees, she diverged into complaints of her neighbours, and of the slanderous reports which were circulated concerning her, not one of which had ever reached my ears. I tried to lead her to subjects more fitting for a sick-bed; but when I in some measure succeeded, every expression of hers betrayed the feeling of the Pharisee, "I thank God that I am not as other men are."

I spoke to her of the awful holiness of God, but it was clear that in her mind there was no answering idea. I asked her if she had ever examined herself by the ten commandments, one by one. She coloured deeply at this question; and replied that though she might have broken a commandment now and then, no one had a right to judge her; she was not worse than other people, but she had many enemies to give her an ill name. Whatever persons might say, she had always kept to her church, she had done no one any harm, and if her soul was not saved at last, she did not know what would become of the rest of the world.

I felt perplexed by a character so different from all that I had hitherto encountered; for though a self-righteous pride is natural to every heart, we do not, I think, commonly find it so openly expressed. I endeavoured to be plain and faithful in further conversing with her, while I sought in silent prayer for help in my poor endeavours; and though I could not hope that my remarks had made any deep impression, I did not leave her without the peace-giving conviction in my own mind that I had not shrunk from delivering the warning message. But as I earnestly desired that she should be still more solemnly and emphatically taught the error of her ways, I mentioned her state of mind to our minister, when apprising

him of her illness, hoping that in his visits he might be the means of convincing her how possible it is to be outwardly correct in the eyes of men, while every thought and action is defiled with sin in the sight of God.

Alas! I was surprised and distressed to learn that even within the knowledge of her fellow-creatures, Mrs. Allanby had been a grievous sinner. I was known to discourage evil reports, and therefore no hint of her real character had ever reached me; but I found that she had indeed need to take her place, like one of old, at the feet of Jesus, and to wash them with her tears. She had been known for years to our minister; he had visited and warned her again and again; and now once more he sat down by her sick-bed, and tried by all that words could do to rouse her to a sense of guilt. But the hardened conscience was beyond all human effort, or if she heard its voice within, she gave no outward sign. With a pertinacity incomprehensible to me, she continued to deny the sins of her former life, and to pride herself, as it seemed, upon the manner in which she performed her duty to her neighbours, her children, and even to God. She rose from her sick-bed, unchanged. I see her now, as I pass her door, or stay to give her an occasional greeting, and there is the same piercing grey eye, that unsoftened by the tear of repentance; the same ready smile, summoned in a moment to her lip. I sometimes look in her face with the vain desire that I could read her heart as plainly, as if that knowledge might help me to words which would reach her conscience and fasten upon her mind. I felt shut in to one resource only, namely, to pray that He to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid, might convince her of sin by the power of his Holy Spirit, and bring her to the Saviour with the contrite prayer, "Be merciful to me, a sinner."

Through hope and discouragement, whether welcomed or disregarded, let the district visitor persevere, for "in due time we shall reap, if we faint not;" and the longer experience of others teaches us that the seed which, through God's blessing, prospers and brings forth increase, is not always that which falls upon ground of the fairest outward promise. E. W.

TRUST AND REST.

HE that trusts the promises most firmly, will observe the precepts most cheerfully.

There is but one place of rest for the human mind, and this is on the Rock—Christ.



THE BUNCH OF GRAPES.

"WELCOME home, dear mamma. I hope you have had a pleasant day," said Maria Harris to her mother, who had just returned from a visit.

"Thank you, my child," Mrs. Harris replied. "In one respect I certainly had. I think I was some comfort to our afflicted friends. But tell me, how have you spent the day?"

"After practising my music lesson, mamma, and reading for some time, I went to the hot-house, and am glad to say that the gardener's new plan with the vines, and the bright sunshine of the last few days, have been so successful, that he assures me the large bunch of grapes will be quite ripe enough to cut for my birth-day party to-morrow evening."

"I am glad of it, Maria, if it will add to the enjoyment of your young friends and yourself."

"But the best of all is, mamma, that not a creature in the whole neighbourhood has a ripe grape except ourselves."

"And how is that the best of all? Will our grapes be better flavoured because none of our neighbours have any?"

Maria laughed. "No, mamma; but it will be so nice to have what is a rarity at my party. But I was telling you my day's adventures. Miss Lawson called to pay a visit while I was in the hot-house, and, hearing where I was, joined me there. This was quite friendly for so fashionable a young lady."

"Are fashionable people usually unfriendly?"

"What I meant, mamma, is, that it was not exactly according to the etiquette by which worldly people think it right to be guided. She seemed surprised to see the grapes; and, looking at that beautiful bunch which you have so kindly given me, mamma, declared they were the finest she had ever seen at this time of year. I said that I hoped she would find them good to-morrow evening at my little birth-day party, my invitation to which she had done me the favour to accept, and that we should also have something far better than fruit. I then mentioned how your old friend Mr. L—, who is just returned from the Sandwich Islands, had kindly promised to come to us, and give us an account of the wonderful volcano in Hawaii, and also of the interesting circumstances connected with the introduction of Christianity there; and that we might learn a great deal that was interesting and useful, so that I hoped our evening would not be thrown away. She said in reply that she should like it very much; and then that her mamma intended having a small party as soon as her grand-papa's cold was better, to which she expected I would go."

"And what answer did you give to that invitation?"

"Oh! mamma, can you doubt? You know they have none but worldly parties, at which they dance and play cards; so I said decidedly that she must excuse me, because I was quite unused to those kind of entertainments, and could not conscientiously attend them."

"Your answer was not kind, nor even polite, Maria."

Maria, who had expected approbation, said, with surprise, "Mamma, I thought you liked Christians to act decidedly."

"Certainly, my dear; but that is a different matter from talking decidedly. Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ, Phil. i. 27. Nothing harsh or rude is consistent with the spirit of that gospel, especially from the lips of a young person and a female. But tell me what reply did Miss Lawson make?"

"Nothing, mamma. She went away shortly after, casting, I do think, a wishful glance at the purple cluster over head; and the gardener remarked it too, for when she was gone he said to me, 'That lady would give something for your bunch of grapes, Miss Maria. Her mother had servants looking everywhere for some yesterday, and would have given a right good price; but not one was to be had.' Now, mamma, this must have been for the intended party to which I was invited. You know worldly people have great competition among them about procuring rarities for their supper tables. By the way, mamma, the cook has taught me a very nice way of settling my grapes in a pyramid, the base to be ornamented with vine-leaves and flowers."

"Has she?" answered Mrs. Harris, who had looked very grave as Maria's tongue ran on. "I gave them to you, my dear, to do what you pleased with them; but I could not foresee that they would have occasioned such vain foolish feelings in your mind."

"Mamma, what can you mean? Is it wrong to settle fruit so that it will look pretty on a supper-table?"

"No, Maria, not in the least. I referred to that competition or selfish rivalry so prevalent about procuring rarities, unattainable by others, for entertainments, which you have just been condemning. Was I not right in calling it vain and foolish? It is not only inconsistent with our religion, but with common sense; and I could not but regret when I found my daughter influenced by it."

"Oh! mamma, you mistake. If I know anything of my own heart, no such feeling—"

Her mother interrupted her. "There is one thing that you ought to know of your own heart, my child, which you have upon the highest authority, that it is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*' It has, I fear, on this occasion led you into much more that was wrong and unchristian than you are as yet aware of."

"What can that be, mamma? The whole matter was a very trifling one; I just repeated it to amuse you. Are not you judging me harshly?"

"That is an error into which a fond mother is not apt to fall, Maria. And as to the matter being a trifling one, always remember that trifles often afford a truer index of character than great actions, and you will find the remembrance especially useful when performing the duty of self-examination, a

* Jer. xvii. 9.

duty that I trust you will engage in when you now retire to your room, in humble dependence upon help from above that you may do it faithfully. First try to discover whether you were not under the influence of the vain and foolish pride of which we have been speaking, when you had such pleasure in anticipating that you would have at your party what Mrs. Lawson could not procure for her more fashionable entertainment. Next examine whether, in attributing that same wrong feeling to Mrs. and Miss Lawson when you heard that they were anxious to procure grapes, you did not judge your neighbours unwarrantably, and transgress against that beautiful Christian grace, charity, which 'thinketh no evil.'"

"Well, dear mamma, what else could I think when I heard of all the trouble they had taken to procure grapes?"

"If you could not make a more charitable conjecture, would it not have been better not to make any? However, I happen to be able to furnish you with a true account of the matter. Miss Lawson's grandfather has had a cold, and though not dangerously ill he was feverish, and wished much for some grapes, which his affectionate relatives did their utmost to procure, though in vain. This I heard in my visit to-day."

Maria coloured deeply, and hung down her head. "Then," added her mother, "I fear, oh! I greatly fear, my child, that there was far too much of the feeling of the proud Pharisee manifested in your conversation with Miss Lawson this morning, than which nothing can be more repulsive or less calculated to adorn the doctrines of the gospel, and recommend them to the acceptance of others. Was there not spiritual pride in your method of contrasting the object of your intended party with that of hers? Believe me, no good can arise from such a manner; and it may have even a worse effect than disgusting worldly people—a term, by the way, which I think you should not incautiously apply to those you know little about; it may sometimes 'quench the smoking flax.'"

"Oh! but, mamma, there could have been no danger of that. Surely Miss Lawson must be classed with the world since she makes no profession of religion; and—"

"Stop, my child. Judge not, except your own heart; and it will teach you that much worldliness may exist where a profession is made, and dances and cards given up. But to return to Miss Lawson. You may remember that she sat next to me at the missionary meeting last week. She appeared interested in Mr. L—'s details; and, what pleased me better, in his practical application of them to those present. She

asked me some questions which indicated this. My reason for requesting you to invite her to-morrow evening was, that I thought if any wish for information on such subjects had been awakened in her mind by what Mr. L— said, his society might, with God's blessing, fan the spark into a flame. Let us still hope that such may be the case."

"I have been very, very wrong, mamma," sobbed Maria, "and I will try to follow your advice."

On the following morning Maria entered her mother's room in tears, carrying an open letter in her hand. "I have been very wrong, very foolish, mamma," she cried. "I have done as you feared, 'quenched the smoking flax;' and, oh! mamma, you will see if you read this note from Miss Lawson." It was as follows:—"Dear Miss Harris,—Please excuse me for not going to your party this evening. To use your own words, 'I am unused to such entertainments;' and, besides, grandpapa is still feverish."

"Have you returned any answer, Maria?"

"Yes, mamma, one that I trust you will approve. I apologized for my words, which I said I was afraid had offended her, acknowledging they were not right. I intreated her to come this evening, promising to do my best to make it pleasant to her; and I regretted her grandpapa's illness still continuing, saying that I took the liberty of sending some grapes, which I hoped he might find refreshing. Then I cut my bunch, and probably he has it by this time."

"You could not have done better, my dear child," said Mrs. Harris, fondly embracing her daughter.

We have only to add that Maria's conciliatory note made a most favourable impression, and Miss Lawson went to the party, where the conversation, as Mrs. Harris had kindly hoped, was the means of awakening in her mind a desire for scriptural information, that ultimately led to the happiest results. The lesson was also useful to Maria, who never after felt pharisaical pride rise in her mind without remembering the bunch of grapes.

E. F. G.

THE FIELD PREACHER.

ONE Sunday morning, when most of the people of the village were going to their places of worship, John Mathews rose from his bed; he still felt heavy and stupid, for the Saturday evening had been spent at the alehouse. He had received his wages for his week's work at six o'clock, and instead of taking

them home to his family, he had gone with his companions to his usual resort, and had remained there drinking away his money and his senses till the house was closed for the night, and he was forced to leave.

He could not remember how he got home, or how much money he had taken there with him; but this he knew, that he now felt very far from comfortable. His head ached dreadfully, and the reproaches of his wife, and the crying of his children made him worse; so, not feeling any inclination for his breakfast, he hurried out of the house as fast as possible.

As he walked along the streets he met little groups of people, neatly dressed, with books in their hands, going to church or chapel. John Mathews, though he had been for some time sinking lower and lower in sin, had not yet lost the sense of shame, and the contrast between the appearance of his nicely-clad neighbours and himself, so dirty and ragged looking, struck him forcibly. He slunk away from meeting them, and turned into the fields, intending to loiter about till the time for service was over; then, he knew, the doors of the alehouses would be open again, and he meant to go into one of them, and pass the remainder of the Sunday there. He had not gone far before he saw a crowd gathered in a field. Thinking there was a fight, he went over, and saw one man upright in a cart, and a number of people assembled round him, some sitting on the grass, some on forms, and some standing.

Field-preaching was not so usual in this village as it is in some other places, and Mathews in his present mood felt just curiosity enough to go nearer to hear what the talking was about. A decent-looking woman who was sitting with her husband and child on one of the forms, made room for him beside her, and John, who had not been inside a place of worship for many months, and who, miserable and degraded as he was, would not for any consideration have been induced to enter one, thus found himself unexpectedly amongst a congregation met for worship in the name of Christ.

After a hymn, the preacher gave out his text: "So God created man in his own image." It was an impressive and solemn sermon, and the people listened with deep attention, as he spoke of the creation of the world, and how all came forth perfect from the hand of God,—the sun, the moon, and stars, the beasts of the fields, the fowls of the air, and last of all man,—"in the image of God created He him." The preacher went on to say that, of all this bright creation, man alone had fallen from his primeval perfection. The sun ruled the day,

and the moon the night, as at first, and the trees gave forth their fruit after their kind as when God pronounced that they were "good." He told of man in the garden of Eden, before sin entered the world, walking "in the likeness of God," pure, upright, and holy; and then contrasted this state of blessedness with his fallen nature since. He drew striking and terrible pictures of the various manifestations of his degradation. After telling of many of the ways in which sin enslaves the soul, he said: "Look at the drunkard, the slave of the very worst passion; his body is wasted; his eyes are red, with tarrying at the wine cup; his mind is sunk and depraved; he ruins his family, and spreads desolation and misery around him. See there the fearful nature of sin!" He then spoke of the dreadful misery which awaits the wicked in hell, aiming in his sermons to rouse his hearers to seek the Lord from fear of his judgments, and then to trust in his love.

From the moment the preacher had begun to speak of the drunkard, John Mathews had taken his words to himself. At first he thought his eyes were fixed on him, and but for shame he would have got up and walked away. As the preacher went on describing the sin and wretchedness, John felt that every word was true; had they been his own confessions about his mind and body, they could not be truer; so he buried his face in his hands, and listened carefully, lest a single word should be lost. The woman who had given him a seat thought he had fallen asleep, and touched his arm to wake him, but he did not move, for the preacher was again urging them to flee from the wrath to come, and to believe in Christ.

As he left off, Mathews felt as if God's word of judgment had gone forth, and that for him there was nothing but a certainty of eternal punishment. After the people separated he still walked about the fields, thinking over and over again of what the preacher had said. That sermon, so startling, so solemn, had struck terror into his mind. Was there no hope then? Was he lost for ever?

The time of public service in the places of worship was over while Mathews walked about, and several men were already assembling round the different alehouses, waiting to go in the minute the doors were opened. Most of them were his jovial companions, and looked as poor and haggard as he did himself. John did not join the group as he generally did; he avoided them now as he had avoided the church-going people in the morning, and when he reached his own house, he sat moodily down, thinking over the words he could not get out of his head.

He did not care to repeat them to his wife, or to anybody else. His wife would tell him it was a bad conscience haunting him, and his companions would only laugh at him.

For the whole week John did not enter the alehouse once; he spent his evenings at home, and his wife, who saw a change in him, but could not find out the cause, tried all she could to make his home a little more quiet, to induce him to continue his good resolutions.

The next Sunday he rose much earlier than usual, and dressed himself with some little care. For the first time he felt vexed that his clothes were so shabby and torn; but it could not be helped now, he must only make the best of them. He walked to the fields, in the hope that the congregation would be again assembled there, and he wished to be on the spot at the first of the service; but he was doomed to disappointment; there was not a creature there. The preacher had gone on his way to other places, unaware that his word of warning had arrested the attention of one poor, guilty hearer, and that the good seed the Lord had permitted him to scatter had already, in one instance, found a resting-place, ready to spring forth, and to bear fruit as God would give the increase. He might never know it till the day when the fruit unto life eternal is gathered in, and both he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together.

John Mathews felt very sorry the preacher he had come to hear was not to be found. During the past week he had been very miserable; a weight of guilt hung on his mind; he felt he must be lost for ever, and he had longed for the Sunday to come again, to hear more on the subject. He sat down on a stone for some time, and listened to the bells ringing on all sides. In his own town, and in the villages scattered round, places of worship were open inviting the people to the morning service. John wondered whether the same things would be preached in them. He would not go where he was known; his companions would hear of it, and laugh at him.

About two miles off there was a little country church,—there, at any rate, he would be safe. So he set off with a quick step, to be in time. The service was commenced when he entered, and he was quite confused as he looked round and saw no one so badly dressed as himself. However, nobody else seemed to remark him. The pew-opener gave him a seat, and the person next him put a book into his hand.

The text of the sermon was, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John felt sorry the subject was not the same he had heard last Sunday; but he

listened most anxiously, and soon discovered that the sermon was not so very different; no, it seemed rather a continuation of the last; and he saw that being "born again" was to have the image of the Lord renewed in the soul. He heard that the most guilty of God's creatures, however fallen and degraded, was not out of the reach of hope. Christ had died for him, and his death had procured for the penitent a full and free pardon. The old sinful heart was put away, and the believer became more and more like what man was when first created,—pure, upright, and holy,—though the full perfection would only be when God shall have changed the "vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

John Mathews heard also that salvation was open to all,—to him, drunkard, sabbath-breaker, as he was.

Time passed on, and every Sunday John was to be seen at the little church, listening with deep attention to God's holy word, and to Mr. W.—'s explanation of its precepts. What a new life was opened to him! As he began to like going to church more, so his former habits became more and more distasteful to him. Sometimes when walking across the fields towards the village, his mind would wander away from the precious words he had heard at church to thoughts about his own home. There it was, much as it had been in his days of sin, dirty-looking and untidy. He was sure to find his wife in miserable clothes, and his children in rags. He had hitherto been timid about speaking to his wife of his new feelings, and of the change that, through grace, was dawning in him; but he could now be silent no longer; he would begin at once then, tell her all he had heard himself, and try to persuade her to improve. At any rate, he would advise her to go to church with him, and the two elder children could go also.

John had much up-hill work to undergo. In the first place, his former life had been so very bad, that it was a long time before either his wife or his neighbours would believe in the truth of his sudden change; and when by continued perseverance in his good endeavours, they were at last convinced of his sincerity, he had to explain all he had learned over and over again, to bring them round to his views. In worldly matters it was much easier to manage. Jane loved a neat house as well as anybody, but for years past her husband had spent most of his wages in drink, and her case was like that of many others; when there is but little money, and scanty food, the love of order gradually grows less. However, now the

weekly sum was regularly brought home, and Jane did her utmost to lay it out to the best advantage. John's clothes, and the children's, and her own soon bore visible traces of improvement. The broken things in the house were replaced, and good wholesome food took the place of the formerly miserable and scanty fare. Who would have imagined, as they saw John Mathews, his wife, and two children, setting out for the little church every Sunday morning, so neatly dressed, that only six months ago he was a drunkard, and they suffering all the misery usually entailed on a drunkard's family? If religion went no further than the things of this world, even then it were a blessing beyond measure, for order, honesty, and all good principles follow in its path.

John Mathews, guided by the Spirit of God, persevered, and overcame most of the difficulties that met him at the commencement of his Christian life. He looked back with horror to his career before God touched his heart by the instrumentality of the field preacher. He might sometimes be seen assisting Mr. W—, by visiting the sick and poor, reading with them and teaching them. He might be seen in his workshop, an industrious and skilful workman, rewarded and valued by his master; and might also be seen, morning and evening, with his family, praying for them and for himself to God, who both heareth and answereth prayer.

M. M. W.

HOME REVIEWS.

PALEY.

"We are going to Mr. L—'s for a new supply of books, papa," said Anna. "What would you recommend to us?"

"Paley's works," replied Mr. Travvers.

"Paley's, papa! Was not he a very learned writer?"

"Would you object to him on that account, Emma?"

"No, papa; but I thought we could not understand him."

"Before you come to such a conclusion, Emma, it would be well to try the experiment. Sir Walter Scott once said, 'I rather suspect that children derive impulses of a powerful and important kind in hearing things which they cannot entirely comprehend, and therefore, that to write down to children's comprehension, seems a mistake. Set them on the scent, and let them puzzle it out.' I am sure this is true, and may also be applied to those who have passed the age of childhood. Therefore, my dears, I say get Paley; and though his arguments may be solid, such is the clearness of his style, and the

aptness of his illustrations, that I am sure you will all comprehend them with only so much exercise of your minds as will strengthen and improve the intellect."

"I thought, papa," said Richard, "that such studies were necessary for boys, but not fit for girls."

"That seems to be the general opinion, to judge by the general practice; but even if, as is supposed, the minds of women are naturally inferior to ours, I should say that was but an additional reason for trying to improve them."

"Then it is an exercise of the mind,—not for the sake of acquiring knowledge,—that you would have us read such books as you are speaking of, papa?" observed Emma.

"Not for the sake of acquiring knowledge to exhibit it, or to hoard it up, but to use it as food for thought, to feed the mind, and thus generate wisdom. It is of no use to read and accumulate facts, if we do not also think. Better to think only, by which we may acquire wisdom, than to read and never think, by which we can merely heap up knowledge."

"You remind me, papa," said Anne, "of the poet Cowper's words. He says—

"Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men:
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own."

"Just so; and I would say to you, in the words of king Solomon, 'Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom.' Another reason why I wish my dear daughters to cultivate a taste for such works as Paley's is, that it would give them a disrelish for desultory reading, to which women have many temptations, and which is the bane of the female mind."

"But, if we have not naturally a liking for the sort of reading which requires or leads to much thought, can we attain it?"

"To a great degree, my dear. The mind is, in one respect, constituted like the body; its strength and growth are promoted by the exercise of its powers; and in that exercise they both, by a beautiful provision of our Creator, experience great enjoyment. Yield not, therefore, to mental indolence, but set your mind going, and you will find that enjoyment increases in proportion to the intellectual vigour which you gain by the exertion. However, the writings of Paley are valuable for other reasons besides the mental exercise they occasion; they impart information on various subjects, and must be deeply interesting to every one who loves the word of God, because they are an able defence against the attacks made on its authenticity and inspiration."

"Will you not papa, give us some notion of these books," said Anne. "I own that to enter on such subjects seems a formidable undertaking for young people like us."

"And yet they are of as much importance to you as to the sagest philosopher. I will try to give you some idea, though it can be but a vague one, of Paley's 'Natural Theology,' which is the first of his works I would have you read. Its object is to prove, from the works of creation, that there must have been an intelligent Creator, possessing infinite power, wisdom, and other attributes, but especially goodness."

"But, papa, could any one be so foolish as to doubt this?"

"You know, my child, that 'the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,' Psa. xiv. 1. The utter corruption of that heart is the origin of such a thought. The wonderful contrivance with which everything has been made to answer a particular purpose, would be sufficient to show that the Maker must have been an intelligent Being. Paley commences with this argument in an ingenious manner. Suppose that in crossing a heath you found a watch upon the ground, and were asked how it happened to be there, you would not think of answering that, for anything you knew, it might have always been there. You would, at once, perceive that its several parts were framed and put together for a purpose; that they are so framed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that if the parts had been differently shaped, or put together in any other manner, either no motion would have been carried on in the machine, or none which answered the use now served by it. Surely you could not help inferring that the watch must have had a maker; that there must have existed at some time or other an artificer, or artificers, who formed it for the purpose which we find it to answer; who understood its construction, and designed its use. Where there is contrivance, there must be a contriver, and where there is design, a designer."

"I think we understand this," said Richard, "and its application to the works of nature; I suppose it is applied to them."

"Yes; every proof of contrivance and design to be found in the watch, exists in the works of nature; with the difference of being, on the side of nature, greater and more, to a degree that exceeds all computation. The author then sets about proving this superiority of the works of nature to the finest productions of human skill, by comparing what he calls 'a single thing with a single thing;' that is, an eye with a telescope, they being both made, one by nature and one by art,

upon the same principles, and both adjusted to the laws by which light is transmitted and refracted. You will all be greatly interested by the minute description which follows of that wonderful piece of mechanism, the eye. In the course of his arguments, all of which you will just as easily understand as that which I have told you, the writer gives an account, not only of the mechanism of the human frame, but of various animals and plants, with which you will all be much pleased, and which will increase your acquaintance with natural history, and, as I hope and trust, your reverence and love for God whose goodness is displayed in everything that he has made."

"I only wonder how anyone can look at the works of creation without observing that," said Anne.

"And yet, my dear, it is a melancholy fact that, as your favourite poet Cowper expresses it—

‘This truth philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In nature’s tendencies, oft overlooks;
And, having found his instrument, forgets,
Or disregards, or more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wields it.’

Our author does not confine his observations on the works of God to this earth, but speaks of the elements that surround it, and also on astronomy, in a way which conveys much information. He then, from all the wonders which he has been viewing, infers the personality, power, and other attributes of the Being who made them. The chapter on the goodness of God I would recommend to your particular attention. It is very beautiful. One proof of this goodness is, he says, that ‘God has superadded pleasure to animal sensations, beyond what was necessary for any other purpose; and thus,’ he continues, ‘it is a happy world after all. The air, the earth, the water, teem with delighted existence. In a spring noon, or on a summer evening, on whichever side I turn my eyes, myriads of happy beings crowd upon my view. The insect youth are on the wing. Swarms of new-born flies are trying their pinions in the air; their sportive motions, their continual change of place, without use or purpose, testifying their joy. A bee among the flowers in spring is one of the cheerfullest objects that can be looked upon. Its life appears to be all enjoyment, so busy and so pleased. If we look to what the waters produce, shoals of the fry of fish frequent the margins of rivers, of lakes, and of the sea. These are so happy that they know not what to do with themselves. Their attitudes, their vivacity, their leaps out of the water, and frolics in it, conduce

to show their excess of spirits. The young of all animals appear to me to receive pleasure simply from the exercise of their limbs and bodily faculties, without reference to any end to be attained by the exertion.' Who can doubt, after considering all this, that God, when he created living things, wished their happiness, and made provision for it?"

"Papa," said Richard, "all you have been telling us has led me to think of something."

Mr. Travers smiled. "I am glad of it, my son. As I said before, there is little to be gained by reading or listening if it do not lead you to think. What was it?"

"This, papa. If so much of the character of God can be learned from the things which he has made, why is it that the heathen, who have not the Bible, but can see his beautiful works as well as we can, know so little about him?"

"I think, my son, that the apostle Paul answers that question in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. You will there learn that sin is the cause why man cannot understand what is so plainly declared by the works of nature. The invisible things of God are indeed clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; but they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but becoming vain in their imaginations, their foolish hearts were darkened, and they fell into idolatry. Though the character and attributes of God may, as the apostle says, be clearly seen in his works, yet without the Holy Spirit's help they cannot be discerned."

"How happy we are to have the Bible," said Anne; "the goodness of God is there revealed."

"We are happy indeed, my child, to possess a direct revelation from God, and should prize above thousands of gold and silver the book that tells of his love to sinners, which led to the gift of his Son, to die that they might be saved. But recollect always that without the same help of the Holy Spirit we cannot read it aright. Our author, Paley, has written much, and ably, to prove that this blessed book must have come from God, because, unhappily, there have been people so wicked and so foolish as to doubt it. You will, I am certain, feel a wish to read more of his writings when you have finished the 'Natural Theology;' and, as I have not time to say more about them now, will only add that I am inclined to envy you such a prospect, particularly that of getting acquainted with his 'Horæ Paulinæ;' for, as one has said, 'the man who never read it has a pleasure in reserve which all who have enjoyed it would be glad to renew.'

“O God! O good beyond compare!
 If thus thy meaner works are fair!
 If thus thy beauties gild the span
 Of ruin'd earth and sinful man,
 How glorious must the mansion be
 Where thy redeemed shall dwell with thee!”

G.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE TIME OF DANGER

THE “Sheffield,” a Liverpool vessel, was just coming to the end of a long and stormy passage across the Atlantic; it had on board one hundred and thirty passengers, who were eagerly anticipating the greetings of their friends, on their reaching port. The cry of “land!” was repeated from mouth to mouth, and each one almost fancied himself at home again, when, all at once, the ship, in the midst of the breakers, struck violently against a rock, and sprang a leak in its side.

“We passed,” says Dr. Butler, of New York, who was one of the passengers, “from a state of lively hope to one of intense anxiety. The water gained rapidly; the boats, had it been possible to lower them, could not contain half the persons on board; how, then, could a selection be made, or the order be maintained that would be indispensable for their safety? The night rapidly advanced; the storm increased in violence; and the vessel was tossed about tremendously. Our signals of distress had been observed; a steamboat tried in vain to get near us; and the darkness of the storm prevented our being seen.

“I was on deck when the vessel struck; I went down to my wife immediately, and was followed by the other passengers into the ladies’ cabin. One of them asked me to pray. At that instant the vessel struck against the rock with increased violence, and our destruction seemed inevitable. We all prostrated ourselves before God, and one of us, in the name of the rest, poured out his heart in supplication. This prayer was followed by a second, a third, and a fourth.

“Under the soothing influence of these devotional exercises our troubled hearts were in some measure restored to tranquillity. We first of all endeavoured to encourage one another; some ventured to express hopes of deliverance, but the greater number remained silent and thoughtful, in preparation for the final catastrophe. The necessity of imploring the Divine aid was felt afresh; ardent supplications were offered, one after another, in a manner peculiarly solemn. A whole hour had thus passed, when the captain tried to prevail upon us to take some food; a little refreshment was brought

but no one had the courage to taste it. The rolling of the vessel was so violent that we had hard work to keep our places. The females lay on the sofas, the men sat on the floor, silent and motionless. We all felt ourselves on the borders of eternity. On leaving Liverpool, a Bible had been provided for each of the passengers who did not possess one. Divine service had been performed daily by the captain, and the good seed bore fruit in this hour of trial.

"Whether Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, or Baptists, all our ecclesiastical shades of difference had vanished. It was made manifest that these differences of system and organization, the unavoidable results of liberty and of the varieties of mental constitution, are at such a season as nothing to those who possess in their hearts the one thing needful—the great truths of salvation, through the love of the Father, and the blood of his Son Jesus Christ, and the influence of his Spirit. We gave one another the right hand of fellowship, and realized the accomplishment of our Saviour's prayer—'that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me,' John xvii. 21. Our visible union deeply affected some on board who were not believers, while the feeling of Christian communion soothed our own hearts in the hour of our common danger. Each seemed to think more about others than about himself; the same deep emotion penetrated all our hearts, but it was not fear; and those whose souls were strengthened by the faith of the gospel endeavoured to encourage those who had not that support.

"At last, the water began to find its way into the cabin. Some bread and wine was offered us, of which we partook, in silence, thinking it would be our last meal. The captain then asked us to come on deck. A minister had just been giving a beautiful and touching address, in which he urged us to resign ourselves entirely to the Saviour. He spoke on the text, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life,' John iii. 14, 15. After that we prayed, and read in succession Psalms xlvii., cvii., and cxxx., and Acts xxvii. We then agreed to go on deck. It was affecting to see many of the females insisting on their companions being taken before them.

"It was almost midnight when, chilled by the cold and wet, we stood, wedged close to one another, the captain came to me, and said that there was nothing left for us, but to pray and commend ourselves to God's mercy. I raised my eyes,

and was struck with the sublime scene of desolation around. The dismayed vessel was tossed to and fro, without being able to get off the rocks. Towards our right, the wind had dispersed the clouds, and the moon had risen clear and bright, like a torch designed to light us to our tomb. Nearly eight miles off, the coast, studded with twinkling lights, was visible, but it was impossible for us to reach it. For my part, I gave up all hopes of being saved. I sat down by the side of my beloved wife, that I might not be separated from her in our last moments. We tried to encourage each other to submit entirely to God's will, and never felt so vividly the strength of wedded love, sanctified by Christianity.

"This last hour was one of silent agony. We awaited our fate; we had already submitted to it; we no longer attempted social prayer; we felt that we must commune with our own hearts, though each showed affection and respect for his neighbour. One of us took out his watch; it had just stopped; he laid hold of the key to wind it up, but let it go in an instant, saying, 'I shall not want it where I shall be to-morrow morning.' This little incident, insignificant in itself, made us realize our situation in a very affecting manner.

"Suddenly one of the passengers exclaimed that he saw an object which seemed coming towards the vessel. All eyes were fixed in that direction. At first we perceived a slight movement on the water, but nothing more; this was repeated a second and a third time. At last the captain declared that through his glass he thought that he saw a dark body approaching. A gleam of hope sprang up in our hearts. Very soon several small lights glimmered in the darkness—beyond a doubt a steamer is coming. It arrives! We are saved! It is impossible to describe our feelings. God grant that none of my readers may ever pass through such a trial!

"Parents and children, husbands and wives, and even strangers embraced each other, pervaded by the same feelings. One of our number raised his voice to remind us of our first duty, to praise and bless God; and immediately more than a hundred voices blessed the God of all mercy, and repeated a song of praise, which the winds wafted to a distance over the billows. Yes, we rendered all glory to God for our deliverance. Most appropriate were the words of the psalmist, 'Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.'

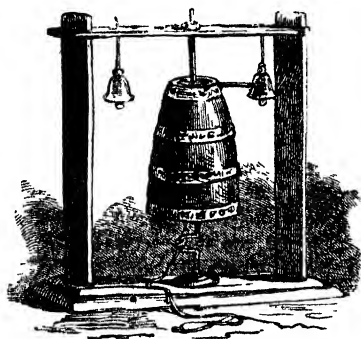
"Within six hours we reached our respective homes. Our

agonizing trial had lasted eleven hours. Not one of us was lost, not a hair of our heads injured. No blame could be attached to the captain. He had engaged a skilful pilot, and had acted all along with the most exemplary firmness and discretion. The passengers joined in presenting him with a family Bible, as a memorial of this fearful night, and of their miraculous deliverance. In acknowledging the gift, he said, 'This holy book is the best testimony you can offer, and, of course, the most valuable I can receive of your approbation. From my earliest childhood I have been taught to love and receive it, to regard it as the ever-shining polar star which must guide my bark over the ocean of life; and is it not also the 'anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil,' Heb. vi. 19.

"One word in conclusion: If it had not been for the possession of vital Christianity, could we have looked with calmness on death, and that under a form so terrific? No, nothing but vital Christianity, nothing but a firm confidence in Jesus as a Saviour, could have calmed the agitation of our souls under such circumstances.

"I intreat you who read these lines to remember that death is perhaps at your door as it was at ours; rest your souls then on the Rock that nothing can shake; 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' Acts xvi. 31.

PRAYING-MACHINES.



ONE hears of machines of various sorts, spinning-machines, threshing-machines, and sewing-machines. Almost everything is done by machinery now-a-days; but did you ever hear of a

praying-machine? Strange as the notion seems, such things are met with in some heathen lands. On the opposite page you see the picture of one used by the people called Buddhists, or worshippers of the false god Buddh, in Sikkim, a country lying to the north of British India. It consists of a small leathern cylinder, or barrel, placed upright in a frame, in which it turns on an axle. A string is fastened to an elbow in the axle, by pulling which the barrel is made to turn round; and, at each pull, a piece of iron projecting from the barrel strikes one or other of two little bells fixed in the frame. Within the barrel are placed written prayers; and whoever pulls the strings is considered to have repeated his prayers as often as the bell rings.*

There are other praying-machines of different construction. In some, the person using them has not even the trouble of pulling a string, or of doing anything at all. Thus, they have a machine which is turned by water. Here the cylinder is inclosed in a little house built over a stream. Like the other, it contains a prayer, or has one written on it outside. It has a spindle which passes through the floor of the building into the water, and is there connected with a wheel turned by the stream, and thus the barrel is made to go round.

You smile at the idea of a praying-machine. "How foolish," you say, "to think that pulling a string, or looking at a tub turned by a water-wheel, is praying! What good can that do?" Yes, I grant you it is foolish, very foolish; it can do no good; it is a toy, not a prayer. But let me ask you, reader, Do you pray? You, who know the true God, and have the Bible, and live in a professedly Christian land,—do you pray? If not, you have no right to look down on the poor Buddhist with his praying-machine. Again, I say, it is foolish, and can do no good. But, poor man, blind and dark as he is, he is at least as wise as you. Be judge yourself: Which is the more heathen,—the Buddhist, who never heard of God, yet does in his poor, vain way pay respect to a god of his own devising, and try to get his help, or you, who, though you profess to believe in the one true God, yet never worship him or seek his favour? Is there anything to choose between you? Or, if there be, which has the best of it? If this poor man be heathen, foolish, deceived, what are you?

But, to pass from those who do not pray at all, let us see whether there be not some who do pray, and yet are no better than the Buddhist with his machine, or rather than praying-machines themselves.

* Hooker's Himalayan Journals, vol. i., p. 172.

Putting aside for the moment the question whether the prayer be made to God or an idol, and considering only the prayer itself, what is it that is wanting in this prayer of the Buddhist? Just one thing—the heart. Now turn your eyes, and look at that Christian at his worship. See him in his place at church or chapel, the place in which, perhaps, he is to be found every sabbath-day. What is he about? Is he praying? There is no appearance of it. His eyes are wandering hither and thither, his face is vacant, there is no sign of feeling there; he does not look as if he were asking for anything, or even attending to the words of prayer that are being spoken. There are thousands of such worshippers in our churches and chapels—are you one? If so, you are but a praying-machine after all, for the heart is wanting; and let but that be away, it does not much matter what else is there. The Buddhist pulls with his fingers, or looks with his eyes; you go down on your knees, and perhaps cover your faces, and even follow the words in a book. But the heart, the heart, where is that? If there be no heart, then all the rest,—fingers, eyes, and knees,—go for nothing, they cannot pray. Nay, even the lips themselves, the very organs of prayer, cannot pray, without the heart. You may repeat the form, or follow the words, and yet be but a praying-machine; for there may be all this, and still no heart.

And when you are alone, reader, and fall down on your knees, morning and evening, as you have been used from a child, ever since your mother drew you to her lap, and put your little hands together, and taught you the first lisplings of prayer,—how is it then? Is the heart there? Do you pray with the spirit? Ah! if you are content with saying the words only, what are you but a praying-machine?

Alas! there are none who do not know what it is to have cold hearts and wandering thoughts in prayer. Even the truest Christians, who love prayer, find too often they are but machines,—lips, knees, hands, but no heart. But this is not their habit or their will. It is a sore trouble to them. They watch, and strive, and pray against it. And why? Because they know that when through infirmity of the flesh they pray thus, it is no prayer, and they grieve to lose the blessing which true prayer brings. Ah! would that all were such! Would that all knew the worth of prayer, true prayer, not machine prayer, but heart prayer!

But, alas! thousands never pray at all, and thousands more are content to pray like machines. What are such prayers? Do they reach heaven? Do they find a hearing? Do they

bring down blessings? No! these are not the prayers which the Spirit helps (Rom. viii. 26), and Jesus the Mediator presents (Heb. iv. 14-16). These are mere words, a form, a mockery, a vain and useless thing, bringing no honour to God, no blessing to man. Let not your prayers be such.

Learn two things, then, from the poor Buddhist. First, pray; but, secondly, do not pray like him.

Pray! Rich or poor, old or young, male or female, master or man, do not live without prayer. Are you living so now? Did you lie down last night without prayer? And this morning, when God had given you, unasked, another night's rest, did you rise and go forth without prayer? Last Lord's-day was your place in the house of prayer empty? And is this the way you live in general,—prayerless mornings, prayerless evenings, prayerless sabbaths? And yet you call yourself a Christian, and say you believe in God. What! believe in God, and not pray? A prayerless Christian? Impossible. Your "Christian" is but a name, your belief is no belief. God cannot be in your heart, or you would pray to him. Why, even the Buddhist shames you. Go and ask any true Christian you know, how he gets strength in weakness, comfort in trouble, help, grace, pardon, peace. Ask him how it was that he overcame that strong temptation which you know beset him, and by what means he got the better of that sore trial which cut him to the quick, and which all thought must crush him. I know what his answer will be. It was prayer. He could not have lived, but for prayer. He could not live without it now. Yet you live without it. No, not live; life is not life without prayer; it wants its chief blessing. If you pray henceforth, you will look back on your present prayerless life, and own how dead and comfortless it was.

Oh, reader, think of your wants, and will you not pray? You cannot draw one breath after another without God; but for him, you are not safe from hour to hour; all you stand in need of daily must come from him. But more, far more than this: you are a sinner, and want pardon; you have provoked God, and need his forbearance; the sword of his justice hangs over your head, and you want his arm of mercy to withhold it; you want more things for your soul than I can tell you of,—forgiveness, grace, help, holiness, heaven; but, in one word, you want CHRIST, and without him you are lost for ever. Will you not pray? You are living without prayer—what if you should die without it? Are you not running this risk? Lose no time—begin this very day.

Pray, but be sure you pray from the heart. Be a praying man, not a praying machine. It matters little what words you use, so you pray heartily, with true faith in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray thus every day; make a habit of it, every morning and evening in private, every Lord's-day in public. Never leave it out. Give up all rather than this. Just speak to God as he has invited you; humbly, yet freely; with deep reverence, yet as a child, to its father. Tell him all you feel, all you want; seek to worship him in spirit and in truth. He will hear; yes! he will hear, for you have a Friend at his right hand, Jesus Christ. While prayers in grand words and grand buildings, but with no heart, are but as the turning of the barrel, an empty useless form, the weakest, humblest, faintest prayer that comes from a contrite, trusting heart will reach the ear of him who heard and blessed the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" F. B.

LESSONS FROM WAR.

THE INVINCIBLE LEADER.

"THE Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name." Thus sang Moses and the children of Israel in the day when the proud hosts of Egypt were overthrown, and Israel "saw the salvation of God." Again the loud song arose, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" A few days after, and renewed occasion was given for praise to Jehovah. Amalek came and fought against Israel. The Lord again delivered his people, using this time human instrumentality, and putting honour upon prayer. The victory gained, an altar in commemoration was reared; and the name "Jehovah-nissi" given to it, by which Israel was encouraged to make the wondrous claim, "Jehovah is my banner."

Forty weary years rolled away, and the time arrived when the favoured people would deeply need new manifestations of God as their Leader and Banner. The promised land was entered, and the hosts of Israel were encamped on the soil, where their pilgrim fathers had pitched their tents ages before. They had just witnessed that wonderful event which in after days kindled the poetic fire of the psalmist, and led him exultingly to ask, "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?"

The leader of this mighty multitude had retired to some

little distance from the camp, most probably to some private spot, in order to meditate and pray. Lifting up his eyes, which had been cast down in solemn thought, he perceived an armed man close upon him, with a drawn sword in his hand. The surprise of Joshua was great, as he had heard no footfall, nor any other sound which told that any one was at hand. Surprised, but not affrighted, he at once accosted the stranger, who, he perceived at a glance, was no ordinary person, asking, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" and received in reply the wonderful announcement, "Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." Joshua immediately fell on his face, and reverently inquired what his commands were, and was first told to loose his shoe from his foot in token of reverence; which being done, this celestial, yea, Divine Leader, revealed to him how he should conduct the war against Jericho, promising him a complete and easy triumph.

Joshua now gladly took his place under this heavenly General, who, though invisible, ever attended the camp of Israel, leading them on from victory to victory, till the land was subdued, and Joshua could exultingly say, "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you."

David was another chosen captain of the Lord's armies; and when that great man had reached the height of his fame, and surveyed his peaceful kingdom, with the surrounding nations his tributaries or allies, he also looked back, traced the Lord's hand, and gave him all the glory. Jehovah had been his strength, "had taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight." His gentleness had made him great, "girded him with strength for the battle, and subdued under him his enemies." Therefore he sang, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust." He acknowledged with gratitude and humility that to a heavenly Leader all his victories were to be ascribed.

The apostle, in recounting the noble deeds of some of his countrymen, says "that they subdued kingdoms, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens;" but he asserts that these things were not achieved by human skill or prowess, but that all was done by faith. Those who thus conquered did so, not in their own or in any mere human strength, but by the power of God, which he had engaged to employ for all those who sought it by believing prayer.

These and many similar things are written to encourage

those who are engaged in the heavenly war; and such histories will be of great use to all who study them attentively. They are intended to point the Christian army, and every individual soldier in it, to the great fact that they have an invincible Leader, who will, if they seek his aid, and obey his directions, go with them to the conflict, and bring them through triumphantly. This leader was typified by Moses, Joshua, and David; and as God never failed these his chosen servants, so surely will he beat down the foes of Christ before his face, and cause the crown to flourish on his head. As the cause of Israel prospered, and ultimately triumphed under their great leaders, so must it be with the cause of Christianity under the leadership of Christ. Of Him, as exalted to the heavenly throne, God testifies, "Behold, I have given him as a leader and commander to the people." He is called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," who hath prevailed to open the seven sealed books, or to fulfil all those purposes which shall issue in God's glory, the salvation of multitudes, and the complete overthrow of Satan.

This is "the invincible Leader" of all who are engaged to fight against sin and Satan. He is now invisible. He comes not, as in the days of old, in a fiery cloudy pillar, or as an armed warrior with a drawn sword; but he is really present with his true-hearted followers, and he is almighty. He hath said, and his words are as true as they are gracious, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;—and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." One noble-minded and strong-hearted Christian soldier, who long and faithfully served under the great Leader, speaks of him as "the Captain of our salvation," Heb. ii. 10—a title full of blessed meaning and strong consolation. The word rendered "captain" signifies "author," and hence "leader." He who leads men to glory is the Author of the great deliverance obtained for them, and he will be the Finisher also, Heb. xii. 2. He has begun to save them, and he will complete their salvation. All believers in the Lord Jesus are saved from the curse and condemnation due to their sins; also from the reigning power of sin: and it is their privilege to triumph over guilt and fear, to possess peace, and enjoy the presence and consolation of the Holy Spirit. The more peace and fellowship they realize, the more will they be enabled to overcome sin within them and the world around them: this is a present salvation, and they shall be saved fully and completely soon. When the soul shall be clean from sin, the body raised in

power, and both fully conformed to Christ, and employed for ever in the service and praise of God, this will be salvation indeed. The Lord hath procured and merited all this for those who believe; and by the power of the Holy Spirit which he is exalted to give, he will surely and fully accomplish the same.

Let all the soldiers of the cross respond to the apostle's call, and seek grace to be continually "looking unto Jesus, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith." What he has done, what he is, and what he has said, will all afford constant subjects for contemplation, and rich sources of consolation. The past history of this wonderful person should produce confidence. He vanquished Satan in a personal conflict in the wilderness. He overcame the world; its frowns never intimidated him, its smiles never seduced him. Its snares, its malice, its good things, its bad things, he alike conquered. He overcame by meekness, by prayer, by patience, by unswerving trust and confidence in God. He overcame the terrors of death, yea, "for the joy set before him" he "endured the cross, despising the shame." Surely his name calls for confidence. He might well say to us what a general of old once said to some of his troops, who were talking of the number of their foes, and the smallness of their own army, "How many do you reckon me for?"

His abilities should kindle courage. He is well suited for a leader. He has fortitude, wisdom, and assurance of success to an infinite degree. The resources of the whole army are in him. The strength of an earthly leader is in his troops; but the Lord, who is our righteousness, is also our strength, and we may well sing, "The Lord is my strength and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

His past favours should call forth gratitude. Every one who serves under him has been bought by him at an infinite price, and has received from him unnumbered proofs of his faithful love and tender care. It is said of the emperor Trajan that he tore his royal robes to bind up the wounds of his soldiers; but Christ was himself torn and bruised that we might be healed. A wounded English general once took from his lips a cup of water, and gave it to a poor wounded soldier, saying, "Your necessities are greater than mine." Your Captain was parched with thirst, that you might take the cup of life. Seek grace to honour such love as this, by hating those sins which he died to remove, and loving that holiness which he died to procure.

His promises should nourish hope, his warnings should produce caution, and his exhortations induce watchfulness. Oh listen to the words of your Captain. His words of command, of consolation, of direction must all be heeded if we would be numbered among the overcomers, and be crowned as those who have striven lawfully. His person should call forth love and adoration. Our great Leader's name should be dearer to us than life. "Cut a little deeper," said a French soldier to a surgeon, who was extracting a ball from his breast, "and you will find the emperor." Should not the name of Christ be graven in our hearts? His costly and condescending love calls for strong affection; and it is this, and this only, that will enable us to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and secure our standing at last with him in triumph on Mount Zion above.

The apostle's design in all that he said about the glory and grace of Christ was to attract sinners to the Saviour, to attach believers more closely to him, and to animate them in their Christian warfare. The first inquiry is, dear reader, have you enlisted under his banner? God has invited you to do so. Christ is revealed as an "ensign" to whom the Gentiles are to seek; "the Shiloh" to whom the people are to be gathered. Have you given in your name? Have you given up your heart? Have you consecrated yourself to him? It is wisdom to do this at once if you have not. If you have, seek to know him more, and you will become more attached to him and to his cause. It is said that when Nelson visited the hospitals where the wounded lay, he would have a kind word or a look of recognition for each. Our Captain knows every soldier fully, with all his history and wants; and each one may form a personal and intimate friendship with him. Only do this: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," and you will be sure to "fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life."

J. C.

THE DYING OFFICER.

FEW events strike with such awe as a sudden death, for it is seldom we realize the fact that the throbbing pulse of the strongest man may in a few hours or seconds be for ever hushed if God so wills.

Many years since the commanding officer of a British regiment, stationed in Ireland, went down as usual to parade; he was a great favourite with his men, who were proud of his

military gait and manly bearing. As for his servant, Pat, he would have laid down his life to serve him, and now stood admiring him as he walked with a manly step to the front of his regiment. In the course of the manœuvres the command was given—Ready, present, fire. Down went every trigger, and a ramrod which one of the men had by mistake left in his musket, entered the officer's body (he being somewhat to the front), and stretched him in agony on the ground. Pat flew to his side and helped to carry him with the greatest tenderness to a neighbouring cabin.

The surgeon of the regiment was soon at his bedside. After examining the wound he told the sufferer it was mortal, and that he could not live more than half an hour. The dying officer's look of anguish changed to one of deep despair. Gazing earnestly at Pat, who never took his eyes off his poor master, he said, "How am I to appear before God whom I have never served on earth—what can I do?"

"Oh," said Pat, "I'm sure a good gentleman like you need not be afraid; if you don't go to heaven, who will?"

The dying man's face took a shade of deeper anguish, and he said, hastily, "Did you ever hear of *any* man going to heaven who did not turn to God until he was dying?"

Poor Pat rubbed his head. He was most anxious to help his master, but this kind of thing was not at all in his way. However, at length he said, "Well, master, I remember hearing long ago, out of the Bible, about a dying thief who went to heaven."

A gleam of hope passed over the dying man's face while he exclaimed, "Read it, read it." But Pat had no Bible, and sad to say, not a man in the regiment possessed one; so he rushed off to a clergyman and asked him to come immediately and bring a Bible.

The officer lay with his eyes fixed on the door, anxiously awaiting his return; and as soon as the clergyman appeared, he said quickly, "Read about the thief." The clergyman opened his Bible, and, turning to the twenty-third chapter of Luke, read at the thirty-ninth verse "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him,

Verily, I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The officer lay with his eyes fixed on the reader, eagerly drinking in each word. When he stopped; the dying man said, "If that man was saved, I may be;" and, raising his clasped hands and eyes to heaven, he said, with the most intense earnestness, "Lord, remember *me* when thou comest into thy kingdom." A calm smile passed over his face, and the lifeless body sank back into Pat's arms. The spirit had returned to God who gave it. Let us hope that the Holy Spirit led him, even at the last moment, to look to Christ with real faith as his Saviour. This clergyman at that time, according to his own statement, cared neither for his own soul nor the soul of any other person; but he was so much struck with this occurrence, that he went home to pray and read his Bible: he "obtained mercy," and became an active servant of Christ.

Reader, do not you put off to a dying moment the seeking of pardon and salvation by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen at once to the invitations of the gospel. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Search the Scriptures." "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." "*To-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace."

THE CONFLICT AND THE VICTORY.

THERE is a battle to be fought;
An uphill race to run;
A crown of glory to be sought;
A victory to be won.

Oh, faint not, Christian, for thy sighs
Are heard before the throne;
The race must come before the prize,
The cross before the crown.



THE BARRED DOOR.

THERE lived in a town in England, two men; the one was rich, and the other poor. The poor man had come as a stranger from a great distance to the town just mentioned, to look for employment, and if you had met him in the street, you could hardly have failed to think that he was truly an object for pity and relief. His dress was torn and soiled; his shoes scarcely clung to his feet, and his face was pale and hollow, as if hunger were gnawing away his life. It was enough to awaken the feelings of compassion in any heart to see him walking feebly along in the midst of a driving rain, and piercing wind, without home, or friends, and not knowing where he was to seek shelter for the night. But few people passed him, for as the evening was cold and wet, they only who

were compelled to do so, left their warm fire-sides at home, and exposed themselves to the inclement weather. His trembling voice as he asked alms was unheeded by those to whom he spoke; they hurried on their way, and hardly gave a glance at the wretched beggar. What should he do in that pitiless, pelting rain? Lie down and die on some door-step?

As he took hold of the railing before a large house to prevent himself from falling, a carriage stopped at the door, and a gentleman got out. The gentleman's attention was immediately arrested by the appearance of the suffering object before him, and having put a few questions to him, he directed his servants to bring him into the hall, and supply him with food, and make him a bed in the coach-house for the night. Nor was he satisfied with this. Having further inquired into the man's history, and having learned that he had been reduced to his present miserable state through circumstances, rather than through any fault or recklessness of his own, he obtained for him a situation, where he was able to earn some shillings a week, enough for his support. The man who had received some education, and was naturally quick and shrewd, gradually advanced himself in the world, laid his earnings by, and was appointed to fill places of trust.

Years had passed away, and you would not have recognised in the portly merchant who sat in his counting-house, superintending a numerous staff of clerks, the poor hunger-stricken man, who once asked alms of the heedless passer by. He had a seat in the town-council, with the prospect of some day filling the honourable office of mayor. But what was singular, he was now living in the very house, at whose door he would have sunk down in hopeless despair, had not the gentleman, who alighted from his carriage, stretched out the hand of charity, and supplying all his wants, proved to him a true friend.

Where was this gentleman now? Alas! a great reverse had befallen him. He had been a wealthy merchant, renowned for his benevolence as much as for his riches, but he had lived to see all his fortune gradually slipping away from his hands. The failure of those whom he had trusted, and some unsuccessful speculations, had left him a bankrupt. He might perhaps have lived on the kindness of his friends, but preferring to gain a livelihood by his own exertions, he accepted a clerkship in a provincial bank in a small town in a distant county. His salary, with the little he had saved from the wreck of his property, sufficed for a time to supply all he

needed, and would have still been enough had not failing health obliged him to relinquish the situation which he held. He now soon found himself reduced to absolute poverty; and in this extremity he determined to apply for aid to his friends. So he again sought his native town.

On the way he thought of the different friends he had, and of the offices of kindness he had been able to do them. One friend especially was much in his mind; the man whom he had relieved on the stormy night referred to, and whose success was mainly owing to his benevolent exertions. Yes, he would make known to him his distress, and give him an opportunity of proving his gratitude to the benefactor who had been the means of raising him to the position which he held.

A cold winter's evening had long closed in, as the traveller approached his old house, now tenanted by his prosperous friend. He rang the bell, and the door was immediately opened by a footman in smart livery, who, with a stare, inquired what he wanted. It was evident that the servant thought that a man so shabbily dressed had no business at the front door. To the inquiry if his master were at home, he at once replied that he was engaged, and could not be seen. A card was placed in the footman's hand, and he was intreated to show it to his master; and while he was gone up stairs, the stranger was obliged to wait outside the door. The servant soon brought back the answer that his master was occupied with some friends, and could not be seen. "It is impossible," thought our traveller. "He cannot have looked at the card, or if he has, he cannot know the circumstances under which I ask for an interview. So he took out another card, wrote a few lines in pencil, and asked the servant to put it into his master's hand.

The man took it with a grumbling voice, and ungracious manner, saying, "he was sure it would be of no use to go again." And he was right, the card was returned, with the message that his master was sorry he could not see Mr. —, but that he sent him half a sovereign for his present need.

A burning flush covered the face of the stranger—a stranger he felt indeed: the money so heartlessly offered was indignantly rejected, and turning away with a bursting heart he heard the door shut behind him, and the key turned in the lock as though to make his exclusion doubly sure!

We need not ask the reader what he thinks of the conduct of the man, who though he owed all he had to the kindness

of his friend, yet shut him out from his door? You are indignant at such heartlessness; you blush for one so devoid of the common feelings of humanity; so utterly unworthy, so deserving of all condemnation. He that could act in such a manner, you feel, as the person described, should be a mark for the finger of scorn. Ah, say you so? And yet may it not be said of thee, O reader, "Thou art the man!"

"How?" you ask.—"Impossible! No one can lay such guilt to my charge."

"Well, let us see. You have a Friend who has showered his blessings upon you. He has given you all that you possess; the house which shelters you; the raiment which covers you; the food which supports you. If you have health, it is his gift; if you have friends, they come from him; he it is who supplies all your need; and the tokens of his loving-kindness, are about your path, and about your bed, and attend upon all your ways: "In him you live, and move, and have your being." You know to whom we refer. It is your God of whom we speak; that God who has given you the greatest of all gifts, his only begotten Son, who was "in the bosom of the Father." "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." When we were in danger of perishing, when we were "enemies to God by wicked works," when we were altogether "gone out of the way," then did God give his Son to humiliation and suffering, and shame and death, that we might be rescued from the wrath to come. He knew the value of our souls; the glories of heaven; the wretchedness of hell, and therefore "he spared not his own Son," but wounded him for our transgressions, and "delivered him up for us all," so that "he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him," that by his stripes we might be healed.

And what has been your return? How have you shown your gratitude to this loving God? His demands have been very simple, very reasonable. "My son," he says, "give me thine heart." Have you done so? or have you not rather treated his claims with contempt, even though he has besought you to yield yourselves to his service? Besought you; yes, for does he not say: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me?" He has "knocked" at your heart by mercies and by judgments; by promises and by warnings; by the whispers of conscience; by his written word and by his preached gospel. He has "knocked" in your

times of happiness, for he would by kindness win you to himself; he has "knocked" in your hour of sorrow, for then, when other comforters failed, you might listen to his voice, and let him in. And what have you done? You have "*barred the door.*" You have shut out from your heart this gracious God. You have said, if not by your words, at least by your actions, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." And is there no base ingratitude here? is there no guilt in this rejection of God? Verily there is, and guilt enough to overwhelm your soul in destruction.

There can be no sin so fearful as his who sins against redeeming love. Such guilt surpasses even that of devils. And if "angels who kept not their first estate are reserved under chains of darkness against the judgment of the great day," what will be the punishment of those who not only break God's law, but despise God's gospel; and who not content that Christ should be crucified once for their sins, "crucify him afresh" by their impenitence and unbelief, "and put him to an open shame?" It must be something inconceivable, and beyond the reach of man's thought. What infinite misery, what depth of anguish, must be the portion of those who "trample under foot" the blood of the cross; who scorn the love of God, and despise the gift of his Son! Then resist not this beseeching God any longer; open your heart to him; turn at his call. There will then be full pardon for the past. The blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse you from all sin. "Believe" only on him, "and thou shalt be saved." There is sufficiency of power in the Holy Spirit to subdue the corruption of your nature. Ask in the name of Jesus Christ for the Holy Spirit, and he shall be given you. "For if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children; how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Yield yourselves to this loving God, and when "he stands knocking at the door of your heart," do not, oh do not be guilty of the tremendous sin of "*BARRING THE DOOR.*"

C. D. B.

FORBEARANCE.

"How very provoking! how discouraging are such instances of ingratitude!" exclaimed Mrs. Norton, as she seated herself in her arm-chair, after returning from a charity school which she had instituted some time before, and chiefly supported both by her money and exertions. "Who would have thought," she continued, "that a person whom I rescued from such

distress, and placed in so comfortable a situation as mistress of the school, could ever have displeased me? Yet she did the same thing before—closed the school and went off, diverting herself, when I was supposed to be out of the way; and although I forgave her, she has now done the very same thing. I cannot overlook such conduct, she shall be dismissed; justice must be practised as well as mercy. Even Mr. Meriton, with all his forbearance, would admit this.”

Mrs. Norton was sincerely religious, and had long been an active and useful labourer in her part of the Lord’s vineyard, which was a country parish; but her temperament was naturally sanguine, and led her to form such high expectations about the success of her efforts as the course of events seldom realized, so that she was subject to frequent disappointments and consequent depression of spirits. On such occasions this lady usually made her complaint to her pastor, Mr. Meriton, from whom she was sure to receive sympathy and council. He was now recovering from a fit of illness, and unable to leave home; so when she had concluded her soliloquy, she set off to walk to his house; having first filled a little basket with the best flowers which her conservatory afforded, as she knew that the old gentleman was fond of them.

She found him seated, with books before him, and welcoming her with his usual cordial smile, he said, after looking in her face, “Something has discomposed you my dear friend. Have you, in the failing of some favourite whom you thought quite perfect, experienced the truth of which I so often remind you, that human nature, even in its regenerate state, is still prone to err?”

“Ah! Mr. Meriton,” she replied, “I know you think me too easily provoked, but when you hear the circumstance which has now annoyed me, you will not wonder that I feel it much.” She then repeated the cause of her present discomposure, concluding with an avowal of her determination to put the young woman who had offended out of her employment as schoolmistress, and appealing to Mr. Meriton if he did not think she deserved it? •

He answered, “Yes; unless there is some extenuating circumstance with which you are unacquainted.”

“That is not likely,” said Mrs. Norton; and as the old gentleman made no reply, she added, rather annoyed that he had not more warmly entered into her feelings on the occasion, “You were reading when I came in. I ought not to interrupt you.”

"Nor need you interrupt me, my dear friend. I was reading the book which you love," drawing a Bible towards him, "and had found some enjoyment in the fourth chapter of Jonah. I believe there is matter for 'godly edifying' in it also: and I will now, if you wish, trace with you the thoughts which were passing through my own mind on this portion of Scripture."

"You could not gratify me more," Mrs. Norton replied, drawing up to the table at which he was seated.

"Well, my friend, in reading this chapter, I was first led to think, how apt we are to admire in God's character what we find ourselves greatly indisposed to imitate. So it was with Jonah. 'I knew that thou wert gracious and merciful,' he says to the Lord, evidently admiring these attributes in the Divine mind, and plainly declaring that he did so. He seems with adoring joy to consider, that God was slow to anger, and repented him of evil. Still he could not bring his own soul to this; he could not imitate God and do likewise. Stranger yet, the exercise by God of those very attributes which Jonah was thus adoringly admiring, causes him trouble and vexation. Instead of making an effort to imitate the mercifulness which he commends, he is angry at the display of it in the Lord's dealings towards Nineveh. How strange; how inconsistent would this state of mind seem in the prophet, did we not know ourselves, and discover similar feelings in our own hearts. Are we not often ready to admire what we refuse to imitate, and the exercise of which makes us angry?"

"It is but too true," said Mrs. Norton, "and your remarks on Jonah's conduct have made me more fully conscious of it than I ever was before."

"And how does the Lord deal with this mind in Jonah?" Mr. Meriton continued. "This seems an interesting inquiry, and we get an answer to it in the chapter. There was a mixture of the precious and the vile in the state of mind which the prophet betrayed. His admiration of God was precious; then the disinclination to imitate what he admired, and his anger at God's acting in character was vile. The Lord, with patient grace, sits down to separate the one from the other. He prepares the pot and the furnace that he may sit over his metal and refine it. He does not look only at the vile things, and cast the whole lump away, as we, with truthless indifference, often do; and Jonah was angry that the Lord was not doing this very thing with Nineveh. But God did not do this very thing with Jonah himself. He looks at the gold as well

as at the dross, and in the way of love, which is ever a patient, toiling principle, and will serve its object to the end rather than give it up, he casts the whole lump into the refining pot, heats the furnace—preparing the gourd, and the worm, and the east wind—in order to bring forth his loved but erring servant as a vessel unto praise.

“Thus Jonah might learn how evil and self-condemning his displeasure at the non-fulfilment of his prediction against the great city was. Because, if he so rejoiced in the gourd which came up in a night, and withered in a night, and for which he had not laboured, could he wonder that the Lord should rejoice in Nineveh, its people, and its cattle, which were all the work of his hand?”

“It was, indeed, a beautiful lesson on forbearance,” observed Mrs. Norton, “and I have often wondered that the prophet should require it. But you, my good friend, have suggested that we need such ourselves, and my conscience now whispers, ‘Whercin thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same thing.’”

“And far, far more inexcusable is the want of that lovely virtue, forbearance, in us, than in the prophet Jonah,” said Mr. Meriton, “living, as we do, under a dispensation of mercy and love, and with such instances of God’s goodness and long-suffering towards sinners before us, as were displayed during the wondrous season of his sojourn among men, when he was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Well might the apostle exclaim with reference to this event, ‘Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,’” 1 John iv. 11.

Mrs. Norton was silent for some time, as if thinking over her pastor’s words; she then said, “May we suppose that Jonah profited by the lesson given him?” Mr. Meriton answered:

“We have seen the process, and I do think we may assume that it accomplished the work designed by the Divine refiner. It is, however, left untold, and left so, perhaps, that we may quit so serious and practical a Scripture under the fine and various impressions which so abrupt a close is well calculated to leave behind it; and which close seems to me one of the beautiful and perfect strokes of the pen of inspiration.”

“Thus considered, its abruptness is very beautiful,” replied the lady.

“Thus,” continued Mr. Meriton, “there is, as I said, both enjoyment and edification to be found in this short chapter. Dear friend, I invited you to sit down at the table with me,

and if the feast have been pleasant or nourishing, let us give the praise to him who is the Lord of it."

"I trust I do so," she answered; "but I must also thank you, dear sir, for pointing out this striking lesson on a virtue in which I am but too deficient. On the occasion which brought me to you, this has been manifested, for I have not been slow to anger, nor forbearing with respect to the person who offended me. But it is not too late to repair my fault so far as she is concerned, and for the future to try and fulfil, with the Holy Spirit's help, the apostolical maxim, 'forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.'"

"The closer our imitation of the meekness and gentleness, the perfect forbearance towards our fellow-creatures which are so beautifully exemplified in our Redeemer's character; the holier, and consequently the happier shall we be," said Mr. Meriton: "always being cautious not to give encouragement to vice. In this respect you will have no difficulty on the present occasion, my friend; for, I rejoice to tell you, your protégée has not been in fault. Thinking that you were from home, she called here to request I would explain and excuse her sudden absence. Her father, whose desertion caused the distress from which you were the means of rescuing her, has returned from Australia a reformed character, bringing with him what will enable him to reside at home and make her comfortable; and she is gone to the seaport where he landed, to meet him at his request."

"Oh! how hastily I condemned this poor young woman," cried Mrs. Norton. "May I, in future, when rejoicing as Jonah did because our God is 'gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness'—oh! may I humbly strive to imitate what I admire."

E. F. G.

THE FUNERAL PARTY.

ONE of the great privileges of the Christian while passing through the world, is the knowledge of the fact, that God is his Father; that the great Almighty Being, who formed the universe, has adopted him as his beloved child. And if the thought be full of comfort in our happiest hours, still more full of sweet consolation is the same thought in the time of sorrow; for then we look up to Him through our tears, with a child-like belief that his present dealing with us is the discipline of a wise and tender parent, who is thus chastening us for our good.

The present world is not our rest, or our final home; we are at present living away from our Father's house. Did he send us no affliction, we might soon love the stranger-land too well, and our hearts would cease to pant for the better pleasures and more enduring joys of our father-land. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby," Heb. xii. 11. And God does thus exercise his children; he trains and educates them by the afflictions of life, to "set their affections on things above," and to find their all in him.

I have been led into this train of reflection, by recalling the following circumstances. I received an invitation to the house of a friend, for the purpose of spending a few hours, with a small assembly of Christians, on the occasion of a very affecting and solemn event. On that day, the body of his son, a young man, twenty years of age, had been carried to the grave. I found the sorrowing parents and weeping sisters and brother, in that deep grief which usually succeeds the final parting with the remains of those long cherished and fondly loved. In addition to the family of the departed were several friends, who, like myself, had come to weep with those who wept, and to comfort one another with the words of Jesus. It was a pleasant and profitable evening; we felt the Lord was there, and we could say with the wise man, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting."

After reading the word of God and prayer, we sat conversing about the wonderful ways of God's providence, and the means he adopts to draw to himself the hearts of his people. It was at last proposed that one or two should tell the rest, of the particular discipline their heavenly Father had recently been exercising towards them.

The first who spoke, was the individual around whose hearth we were assembled. He said, "I have long known, and I humbly trust have been led to follow, the Lord Jesus Christ. My first serious impressions were received in a sabbath-school in London forty-five years ago. Since then I have been enabled, by God's grace, to endeavour to walk in the way of the Lord's commandments, and have found it a delightful road. I married happily, and have been blessed with a family of affectionate and dutiful children. But though goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, my path has not been free from rough and stony places. I have had the ordinary troubles of a family man, and of late years they have thickened

about me. Consumption, that insidious disease which so often ravages families, entered mine. One fine youth, after several months' suffering, sank into the grave. Oh, how I wept over the bier of my first dead child! the blow was heavy, and hard was the struggle to keep down the rebellious murmur; but, blessed be God, he did enable me to submit to his holy will.

"A year had scarcely passed, ere I was again bereaved; this time, it was one nearer to me, and dearer; the beloved partner of my pilgrimage was removed from earth to heaven. She had long been struggling with the malady, and the fatal dart was hurled at last. Ah me! that was a trial! a part of my very soul seemed to be taken from me. I stood in all the loneliness of widowhood; but I knew she was gone to be with Jesus, which is far better, and thus my God consoled me.

"Months passed, one after another, and again I stood at the grave's mouth—a second child was taken from me. 'Lord, why is this?' I trembling cried; 'wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?' Several years have passed since then, and now again the Lord's hand is upon me. You are here, as others have been before, to offer your sympathy and prayer with me and mine in another trial. This day have I laid my third full-grown son in the grave. His sickness has been long, but patiently borne. I trust he was taught of God. I have often brought my children in prayer to Jesus, and now they dwell with him. In looking back upon the departure of those four well-beloved of my heart, I can say, 'These all died in faith.' I sorrow not as those without hope, the Holy Spirit has blessed my instructions to them, and now they shine in glory. 'Very strong is the attraction they present to me, to the upper and better world; I shall go to them, though they will not return to me. This, I think, is the lesson God would teach me.'

Thus did my friend record the discipline of his heavenly Father with him; he had been exercised thereby, he had had lesson upon lesson, yet the Lord knew he had need of them. As he sat before me, his face shaded with one hand, the other thrown around the neck of his youngest born, I knew his tears were flowing, and his heart was full; and the effort was a great one, which enabled him to respond to the words of Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The next speaker was a cheerful, happy-looking man of God. His countenance seemed to tell us that "the joy of the Lord was his strength." He had long trod the paths of faith and holiness, and his hair was growing grey in his Master's

employment. He turned over the leaves of the hymn book he held in his hand, and said impressively, "Here is a hymn that will suit us very well,—

‘ God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform, etc.’ ”

He read it through, and then said, "I have often, when singing that hymn, felt its truth, and realized its beauty. How true it is, that our unbelief wrongly interprets the Lord's dealings with us. Is he not our Father? and do not all his dealings bear the seal of a father's love and benevolence? Like my dear brother yonder, I have been exercised, and still am, by trial, not in the same way as he, but in a more painful manner. I am the father of but one child, and that child is my calamity. I have nourished and brought him up, and he has rebelled against me. Oh! my heart yearns over my wandering boy, my spirit longs for the prodigal's return. I instructed him, tried to train him in the way of righteousness, prayed for him, as only a parent can pray for a beloved child, but all has yet been in vain: he is giddy, hardhearted, stubborn, incorrigible, a blight upon his father's hopes, a blot upon his father's name, 'a foolish son, a grief to his father, and a bitterness to her that bare him,' and what trial so heavy as this?

‘ Oh! sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child.’

Fondly did I watch over his infant years, greeted with intense delight his opening faculties. His lisping tongue I taught to say, 'Our Father who art in heaven,' yet sometimes when that holy name has been blasphemed by him, I have wished that he had never been born; I have felt that it had been better had I followed him to a baby's grave. Sometimes I fear the Lord has given him up, and again my faith in our good and kind Father will not let me imagine that all our prayers for him are in vain. I call upon my soul to cheer up, and I dash the tears from my eyes and cry, 'He shall yet arise and come to his Father.'

"And, perhaps, this trial was a needful one. I loved the boy too well; he had a larger portion of my heart than my Saviour. His conduct has driven me to the mercy seat; my own soul has thus been more closely united to my heavenly Father. I have seen less in earth to allure me, and more in Christ to win me; and far more clearly have I understood the position of the rebellious sinner in the sight of a holy God,

and the Divine compassion that has made that sinner's salvation a possible thing."

Our friend having finished his narrative, read with deep solemnity the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, and led the little band in a humble, fervent, and simple prayer to the God of all consolation. There was that about him which told us, that in him was found the "peaceable fruits of righteousness."

Just at my left hand, sat a lady who had recently been called to pass through a vale of tears. It will perhaps be better to give the substance of her narrative, than to detail it precisely as related.

Her's had been a happy family. Her husband was a pious man, adorning the profession of the gospel, and she herself was active and useful in the church of Christ to which she belonged. One daughter and a son enlivened their home, and shed a lustre upon their path. Several years passed in peace; then came change. The daughter married with her parents' consent, and, as they thought, comfortably. Her husband was kind, her home was well furnished, her prospects seemed bright; but ere long unfavourable reports were heard, they proved too true; the newly married man had to fly his country to escape the rough hand of the law, and his wife went with him, and the sorrowing parents were left to mourn over her fate: "Oh!" said the mother, "it is a heavy trial to have our daughter removed so many hundreds of miles from us; you dont know sir, how our hearts have bled for that child, but our hope and prayer is that the Lord will sanctify this sad event to her soul's eternal good; he leads by a way that we know not."

This was not all their trial. The son, their remaining child, fell sick, and death seemed to have marked him for his prey. Days and weeks did the fond mother anxiously watch by his bedside, marking every change, now hoping, now fearing, praying that if it were the Lord's will, her boy might be spared; and prayer earnestly, believingly offered in the great Redeemer's name was heard. He who was brought down to the gates of death revived, and at the period of our meeting, had almost recovered his wonted health and strength; but as the mother sat among us, I knew how her heart yearned over her far-away daughter; how it lingered in fond recollection about the last look, the last word, the last embrace; and it needed but a word to unseal the fountain of her tears, and to call forth all the mother's gushing feelings towards her absent child. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and each week as it passed, but strengthened the desire to see and embrace

her once more. Ah! why are these things so? Not in wrath, but in love are these trials sent; they spring not from the dust. A Father's hand inflicts the blow; a Father's love sends the affliction. Anxious mother, do not rebel, do not murmur. Look up to your home above; pray to "your Father who seeth in secret," pray in faith, pray earnestly, and those prayers shall not go unanswered. Distance severs not from God; your child in that far off land is seen by him; from you to him, from him to her, with more than lightning's speed, a message can fly; and perhaps, praying mother, even now, your prayer is answered, your child is saved.

There was another in that small company, who, though young in years, had yet seen trials; not to the extent of the other three, yet enough to tell him, that in the world he should have tribulation; enough to teach him, that his Father in heaven would have him seek for a better and more enduring rest than earth can afford. He had been drawn, by circumstances over which he had no control, into a lawsuit, the issue of which was uncertain, and the failure of which, on his part, would blight his prospects for many years to come. A Christian can never be brought into litigation without its being a severe trial to him, and so it was in this case; but He by whom man's goings are ordered, had chosen this discipline to exercise his child. I was glad to hear him say, "I have been enabled to commit my case to the Lord, I have rolled my burden upon him, and truly he has sustained me; I could not have believed, had any one told me, that I should have been so very cheerful under these circumstances; and to him I leave the result, believing it is among the 'all things' which work together for good to those who love the Lord, and are the called according to his purpose."

There were others in that room who might have told us the peculiar way in which the Lord had tried them, but the hour was getting late, and we were obliged to separate. We took leave of each other, with the feeling that we were brethren and sisters; belonging to one family; having one Father, one elder Brother, even Christ, and one final abode. We may never all meet again on earth, but we trust to meet there, and "never part again." As I walked home, I thought of that future reunion, and the delight and joy we shall then experience in recounting all the way by which the Lord our God led us here below. We shall then, I doubt not, see how tender a Father he has been to us, and how kindly he has dealt with us; that

those circumstances which constituted our heaviest trials, were the shields he threw around us to protect us from far more serious disasters. And with a fresh burst of praise, and a more joyful hallelujah at each fresh recollection, we shall join in the song of the redeemed before the throne. F. B.

THE OLD GENERAL.

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.

It is believed that there are two kinds of forces in nature, the repulsive and the attractive: and the same may be said to exist in human beings. We occasionally see people who have the power of attracting every one to them, while we remark others who repel every one who comes near them. Old General — was one of the latter, for he was feared and hated by all who knew him, and in his own family was a perfect tyrant. For example, he was often known to follow his wife and daughter to a party, and order them to go home instantly, without assigning, or having, any reason whatever for this peremptory command.

But those who excite fear in others, are often much tormented by it themselves, and certainly few more dreaded the cholera when it first visited this country, than this fierce soldier. Hoping thereby to avoid it, he removed, with his wife and daughters, from the country town in which he resided, to a retired watering place. It happened that an excellent clergyman was also spending the summer at this quiet spot. With his usual desire to benefit those around him, he invited all who liked to do so, to attend his family worship every morning at ten o'clock, and many availed themselves of this privilege.

The general's daughters had just lost a much loved sister, and although this event had not appeared to soften their father's heart, it had much saddened the poor daughters'. Some good ladies who resided in the place, therefore, hoping to soothe their wounded hearts, offered to take them to Mr. C——'s house; and also invited them to come to their own residence, where Mr. C—— read and explained the Scriptures once a week in the evening; but their father sternly forbade them going near Mr. C——, or any of his family.

About a week after the general's arrival, the clergyman's wife was suddenly attacked with illness, which had at first all the symptoms of cholera, although it afterwards proved to be of another nature. The old soldier was greatly alarmed, and with his usual eccentricity, and disregard of the comfort of

others, he used to awake the invalid every morning at seven o'clock, by a thundering knock at the door, to inquire how she was.

Soon after Mrs. C—— was well enough to rejoin the family at breakfast, the general, to her great surprise, called just before the hour for family prayer. As the people began gradually to arrive, he, to her great embarrassment, still lingered on, and at length, when the room was beginning to fill, stationed himself at the door, so that every one was obliged to push past him; seeming greatly astonished to find themselves in such close contact with this fierce-looking man. The door was as usual left open, and he continued standing by it, during the singing of a hymn, the reading, and expounding of a chapter of the Bible, and the prayer: he then silently departed.

The next day he appeared again, took no notice of any one, but remained standing at the same spot, except at the prayer, when he knelt on the top of a form. On the third morning, he shook Mr. C—— warmly by the hand, when he came in, and at prayer fell on his knees, and buried his face in his hands.

The next morning he came at nine, and had a long conversation with the clergyman before the worship commenced, and continued to visit him, and receive his public and private instructions, until Mr. C—— returned to his flock. The exact purport of the conversations were only known to themselves, and God; but the result, through the Spirit's influence, was, that when the general returned home, an acquaintance remarked concerning him, "The lion has become a lamb." He proved the truth of those striking lines,

"Is there a thing that moves and breaks
A heart as hard as stone,
Or warms a heart as cold as ice?
'Tis Jesus' blood alone."

To him "the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." He "obtained mercy," that in him "Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting," 1 Tim. i. 14, 16.

Some time after the general's return home, his spiritual instructor went to the town in which he lived, to attend a missionary meeting. The old man called upon him, and expressed a strong desire to speak at the meeting. His wish was gratified: and to the great surprise of his fellow townsmen assem-

bled in the town hall, the stern looking old soldier rose to second a resolution, which he read with a tremulous voice, from a paper which quivered in his trembling hand. He then said he had come there that night, to make an open confession of his faith in Christ; and whilst he recorded his own sinfulness, and the love of Christ through whose death he had obtained pardon, the tears chased one another down his furrowed cheeks, and many a man in the room dashed the tear from his eye, while he looked with deep sympathy at the stern old warrior, the depths of whose very soul seemed to be harrowed up; even children who were there, looked on in silent wonder.

Years passed away, and the old general lived on in a quiet Christian way, still an eccentric, though no longer a tyrannical man. At length he was called away, and, we trust, sleeps in Jesus, through whose grace he had become so changed a man, that his wife and daughters sincerely mourned for him who had once been one of the most repulsive men that ever saddened a home.

One fact must be added to prove still further how practical his religious feelings were. Some months after the general had become acquainted with the clergyman, who by God's blessing was so useful to him, he wrote to ask his advice as to some money that he had obtained many years before by exorbitant interest from a spendthrift. The transaction was strictly legal, but the general thought not "Christian-like;" and wrote, "If General — knows his own mind, no earthly consideration would induce him to a repetition of it."

As his clerical friend advised his doing so, he wrote to the person with whom he had had the transaction, offering to return the money which he felt was more than he ought to have taken; it amounted to six hundred and eighty pounds. He wrote, "Give all the praise and glory to the Almighty and our blessed Redeemer, for having mercifully given me the inclination and means to obey what I conceive to be his commands."

The gentleman replied, "I need scarcely say, that my surprise was very great on reading the contents [of your letter], and I cannot imagine a more striking and beautiful instance than it displays of upright and conscientious feeling. I beg you will accept my best thanks for it."

V. A.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined," Isa. ix. 2; Matt. iv. 16.

SOME, doubtless, of our readers have, in their younger days at least, climbed the lofty mountains of our country, or of other lands, to survey the beauties of the surrounding regions? You have ascended before daybreak to catch the sun as it rises. Night still broods over the valleys. And how many objects are enveloped in its shade! In the towns, in the villages, how much sleepless misery! How many sufferers who exclaim, "Would to God it were morning!" How many are indulging in pleasant dreams which will soon be exchanged for sad realities! What sins, what crimes have been committed under cover of the night; for there are evil works that "love darkness rather than light." But the grey dawn appears on the horizon; the beasts of the forest retire to their dens; the birds with their joyful notes celebrate the return of day. At last, the sun appears and spreads new life over all nature, and those who were in darkness now see a great light.

But such a scene is only an emblem of the darkness and the light which occupied the prophet's thoughts. He was contemplating another darkness far more intense, and another light far more brilliant; another shadow of death far deeper than that presented to us by sleep. The darkness to which he refers, was that which the Holy Spirit describes by the apostle Paul, when he says, that men refused to acknowledge God in his works: that they did not glorify him, neither were thankful; "but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man;—and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever," Rom. i. 21–23, 25. Ignorance of spiritual things, idolatry, corruption, tyranny prevailing, such was the state of the Gentile world before the coming of Christ. The Jews, the people whom God had reserved for himself, although they knew the Almighty and his laws, were also involved in the darkness of sin, insensible to the threatenings of the prophets who foretold the Divine chastisements, and strove to rouse them from the slumbers of spiritual death.

To dissipate this spiritual darkness, a spiritual light was needed. That which the prophetic vision of Isaiah beheld,

was the same that Balaam had already seen from afar, Num. xxiv. 17, and other prophets had announced, and of which there was a vague presentiment throughout the east. It was the Only Begotten of the Father, who calls himself the Light, and is also called "the Life" and "the Word," God manifesting himself in the flesh directly to man. Nothing less would be powerful enough to dissipate the thick darkness in which the world was enveloped. Jesus alone can translate us from darkness to light, from death to life, and deliver us from the power of Satan unto God.

But could the appearance of the Son of God in Judea, his short life here below, and even his teaching and expiatory death, dissipate by their Divine light for ever and throughout the world, the darkness of mankind? Is it an absolute general fact, that mankind as they really exist, or at least the nations who wear the Christian name, now walk in the light, and no longer dwell in the shadow of death? Alas! it is sufficient to look around us, to know that this is not the case. We hear much indeed of this "enlightened" age; its philosophy is paraded before us; we are pointed to its telegraphs and its railways; and in truth man has extended his researches in every direction; the results of human industry are enormous. But this vaunted progress is only for the present world and time; and the greater its advance, the more to a great extent are men filled with pride and self-confidence; the more are they blinded and their eyes veiled, so that they do not discern the true, eternal light, the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 4. For this reason, Jesus said to the "enlightened" Jews of his day, "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness," Luke xi. 35. And in our times the same warning is applicable to those who boast of light that is not derived from him, and to whom the words of Isaiah apply, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" Isa. v. 20, 21.

In the present day as in the times of Isaiah, though the outward man may see the light of the sun, though men in their social capacity rejoice in the progress of industry; yet men considered as moral and immortal beings who must appear before God in judgment, in other words, men in their essential characteristics, may, in a very large proportion, be still described as "a people walking in darkness, and dwelling in the land of the shadow of death." Their minds are darkened by

the hardness of their hearts; their knowledge of God and of themselves has been misapplied; they have taken their own prejudices for truth, in order to indulge their carnal inclinations; they have become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts have been darkened, though they are not conscious of it. Men believe that they see, and know not that they are blind and poor, and miserable and naked, John ix. 41; Rev. iii. 17, 18.

This being the state of the great bulk of mankind, it is the same light as that of which Isaiah speaks, that alone can enlighten us to salvation. The same God, who on the day of the creation commanded the light to shine out of darkness, must shine into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and thus call us out of darkness into his marvellous light, 2 Cor. iv. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9. This is a work which must be accomplished in the soul of every individual for his salvation. Salvation is not an affair of nations, or of this or that church. God does not save men in masses, in groups, or by classes. It is a concern of individuals. "Ye shall be gathered one by one," says Isaiah, xxvii. 12. Jesus, the true light, must enlighten you personally, you Peter, and you Mary; your soul must be illuminated by his Spirit. Jesus must be formed, and, as it were, born in you," Gal. iv. 19. Then the birthday of Christ will be to you a true festival, and the birth of Jesus will be to you "tidings of great joy."

But in order that Christ's light may be a matter of great joy to you, the darkness of evil, of sin, of spiritual death must be felt as a burden from which you seek to be delivered. A traveller once visited the catacombs at Rome, those vast caverns where so many Christians lived and died during the persecutions of the first ages. With a torch in his hand he traversed those subterraneous passages and vaults, and contemplated the tombs of the martyrs. All at once, his torch went out, and he was left in this immense labyrinth unable to find his way out. One day, two days passed; sometimes in gloomy despair, sometimes in vain efforts, he groped about in this vast repository of the dead. At last he fell down exhausted, but on looking around him, he perceived a faint glimmer. Hope gave him some strength; he dragged himself along in that direction, and after a while, emerged into daylight and life. Oh how radiant did the sun appear to him! How beautiful was nature! How marvellous was that world to which he was restored! What made every object with which he had been

familiar so interesting, was the contrast between his deliverance and the awful darkness in which he had been buried.

Only be awakened to a sense of your misery, your state of sin and condemnation; acknowledge your inability to extricate yourself from it; and in your agony direct a look of prayer and faith to Jesus, and his light will arise in your darkness; you will be delivered, and all things will appear new. "I am the light of the world:" said our Lord, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," John viii. 12, xii. 46.

Only he who believes in Jesus, and follows him, and has the light of faith, will be saved. But this light is offered to all. There are favourable seasons for individuals as well as for nations, when the grace of the gospel is presented to them; when the Lord sends messengers to set before them the word of truth and mercy. If this message be welcomed, God blesses it, and grants, according to his promise, grace upon grace. If it is despised and rejected, the result is fatal. Jesus wept over Jerusalem, because it knew not the day of its visitation, and was about to suffer the consequences of its blindness by its destruction.

Fellow-sinners, receive instruction. To-day is the accepted time; to-day is the day of salvation. The light of the gospel is no longer like a contraband article that is not allowed to pass over our shores. Now we can easily procure the word of life, the gift of our heavenly Father to his children. We can seek to extricate from darkness those who have long lived in ignorance; we can instruct them freely in the word of God. How long the opportunity may last, God only knows! If we do not profit by it, if we abuse it, it may leave us never to return, or we may be removed for ever. Let us not neglect this great salvation. Let us work while it is day; let us walk in the light while we have the light. Let us make use of it not only to distinguish and reject falsehood, but to seek and follow the truth. Let us not be led astray by the false lights of the world, but constantly be guided by the pure light of the gospel of Jesus. May there be many for whom Jesus has been really born a Saviour; to whom he will be more than a mere name which is often taken in vain; their light, their hope, their salvation, their joy, their life, their all!

May it be truly said of us, "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light; and light is risen on them who dwell in the region of the shadow of death." God grant it! Amen.

G. S.

A JEW'S "GOOD CONFESSION."

THE following statement was publicly made by a convert of the house of Israel, on his baptism as a Christian. Being a foreigner, the style is foreign, but it is better to give the confession as it was uttered, than to impair its simplicity, and heart-language.

"Never felt I myself so much convinced of the words of the prophet Jeremiah as I do now—' Ah, Lord, I know not how to speak, for I am a child!' Truly, dear hearers, I stay as a child in this country, not well acquainted with its language, and as a child in Christianity. It does not want many words to convince you of my inward feeling at this very time, but you will sympathize with me, if you only consider that in the moment that I do confess that Jesus is the Christ, will a happy, loved period, in which I was surrounded by most kind parents, families, and friends, be closed. They who once loved me will henceforth not bless me, and the doors of my home will be shut for ever. I shall have to meet with more than one Shimei, calling after me, 'Thou son of Belial.' But I have not sent the ark of God back, as king David did when he left home. No! the throne of mercy was and is before me. This is the only treasure I carry with me—all others I have left behind me. The star of Bethlehem went before me, I followed Him—His true light I perceive now. I speak of the blessed Redeemer's star which I did follow. That I am a believer in Christ, I will now declare before his people. If I am asked how I became a believer in the Messiah, I can only say, by the good grace of God; as the Redeemer said, 'No man can come nigh to me, except the Father draw him.' Infidelity was only known to me after its name; I lived in the orthodox rabbinical faith, and my prayers were always mingled with deep expressions for the coming of the Messiah. I spent my time in the study of God's holy word day and night, and preached with all my strength the rabbinical Judaism. Looking over the state wherein rabbinical Judaism is now placed, I said often to myself, 'Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?'

"The Jewish religious life seemed to me day by day more a dead one, when I did compare it with the life in the neighbouring Christian congregation. It was a most critical state where I had then been placed. I stood between dead Judaism and living Christianity. The words of the prophet describe

best what I felt there—'I have been like an hungry man, which dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and behold his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul has appetite.' The prophetic predictions of the Messiah I read with the rabbinical explanations, therefore I could not believe that Jesus was the Christ. But so soon as I, at the university, heard them out of the mouth of Christian theologians, with their interpretations, I must confess that their words contained more light than the rabbinical. But it was not sufficient to bring me nigh to Christ, it was only a seed sown into my heart which in later time sprang up. God, in his providence, had compassion on my soul, and sent me a good man, who spoke to my heart about Jesus. I searched then the Scriptures, under deep prayers, and there I met the Angel Jehovah. This was the time of my day-break, I struggled with the angel, but I said unto him, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' He blessed me, showed me the well of living water, as he once did unto Hagar. I will not describe the troubles I had, leaving my fatherland; but the Lord spoke to me—'Be not afraid, I am with thee whither thou goest.' It was a great providence of the Lord to bring me into this country—there I had opportunity enough to see the pure living Christianity; and the words spoken from this pulpit have been a balm to my heart. I am now fully convinced of my sinfulness, and that there is now no other hope for me than to fly to the bosom of Jesus. I believe that he is the true Redeemer which should come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Judah.

"Staying now in the holy of holiest, where not, like Samuel, my mother did place me; I shall therefore, if the Lord calls me, either by day in the hour of happiness, or by night in the hour of misery, I shall know the Lord's voice. I shall not fancy the priest Eli did call me. No; henceforth I have only one High Priest, even Christ! He lives in me, and I hope to become a living member in his body. In my past time I see only a long night, where, at the close of it, I saw the heavenly ladder, and the angels of God descending and ascending upon the Son of man. Like as Jacob arising in the morning erected a memorial, at once promising to build there a temple, so do I. The few words spoken to you shall stand as a witness between God and me. And I pray that the Lord may keep me and give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and I will build a temple to the Lord—I mean, I will remain in his

service and glorify him. The words once written at this very day at the cross, I will declare them openly—"Jesus, the King of the Jews;" and I will add, the Redeemer of all mankind. Yea, gracious Saviour, I have confessed thee—remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!"—*Jewish Herald*.

A VISITOR'S NARRATIVE.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc.

NOT having lately met with much that was encouraging in my district, I was wishing one morning that I might have some interesting work given me to do for the Lord, and put up a short petition to that effect. That afternoon, while talking with the woman of a house at which I called, she happened to name a poor woman, Mrs. C—, who was dying of consumption very near, and who, she thought, would be glad to see me. I had never heard of her before, and I at once hoped that this might be the work I had been asking for.

I went, and found a very pleasing young woman, evidently in the last stage of consumption. She appeared pleased to see me, and I soon began to speak to her about her soul. She was very willing to listen; but on questioning her closely as regarded her state before God, I found that, though she admitted in general terms that she was a sinner, there was evidently no real conviction of sin in her mind. She told me that, looking back on her past life, she did not know anything particular she had done wrong, or that distressed her to remember. She had tried to do her duty, to bring up her children well, and, as far as she knew, had never wronged any one.

I admitted that all this was very likely, and said it was very probable she had been a good wife and a good mother (both were true in an unusual degree), regular at church, honest, industrious, kind to her neighbours, etc., and, in fact, drew a tolerable picture of moral excellence, which I allowed might be, and I believed was, a faithful portrait of herself. But I mentioned to her the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind," showing her that it had equal force with those, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," etc. Using M'Cheyne's invaluable argument, that moral and social virtues in the different relations of life only add to our guilt that God should be the only Father not honoured, the only Friend not loved; I showed her what infinitely higher and stronger claims God has upon our hearts,

and affections, and service, as our Father, Creator, and Redeemer, than all earthly friends and relations, however near and dear; and proved to her that the fact that we not only did not, but could not, love God with all our heart, so far from excusing us, only set our guiltiness in a stronger light; for how hard, and selfish, and wretched must that heart be that cannot love its best Friend and Benefactor, its most tender and loving Father. I then tried to bring home to her conscience the fact that every day, every hour, every moment of her life she had been breaking this first, this great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

It was wonderful to see how she fell under the power of this word of God, carried home, I doubt not, by the Spirit to her soul. She wept, and, fearing the effect of strong emotion upon her weak frame, I said gently, "I do not wish to distress you: I only wish to speak faithfully to you for your soul's good." She replied in a choking voice, "Oh! you don't distress me. Go on; pray go on. I feel it's all true; every word is true; but I never thought of it in this way before."

As it was possible, from her weak state, that I might never see her again in this world, I could not leave her without "preaching to her Jesus;" and He who has the "tongue of the learned," on purpose "that he may speak a word in season to them that are weary," doubtless suggested the passage about which I should speak to her. It was this: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

I told her, that though it was our own sin and misery that we did not and could not love God, yet he had provided a remedy; so that though her guilt was great, in that she had been breaking this command every moment of her life, yet there was One who had taken away sin, and put it away by the sacrifice of himself, who had not only suffered the punishment due to disobedience, but who had himself, in the stead of sinners, and for them, perfectly obeyed this great command; and that, coming to him just as she was, and casting her poor, helpless, guilty soul on him, and looking to him alone, God would for his sake pardon and accept her as though she had never sinned.

I then showed her how the pity and compassion of Jesus, when he was on earth, flowed freely forth on all who felt their need of it; how he received all with overflowing mercy and most tender pity; how he sent none away, etc.: and then showed her how his heart was still the same in heaven; that he was the same Jesus there that he had been here; the same

yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that there was the same mercy and pardon and love for her, if she repented and believed on him, that the vilest sinners received at his hands when here below. I then left her. This was Saturday.

On Monday I went again, and spoke a few words to her. She seemed dozy and in pain, and hardly opened her eyes. I felt a little disappointed, fearing the deep feeling she had manifested had passed away, and rose to go. With sudden energy she opened her eyes, looked earnestly and imploringly at me, saying, "Must you go? Oh! do come again. Those blessed words you told me last time have never been out of my mind, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Every time I have waked, though sometimes in agonies of pain, those blessed words have been ringing in my ears."

I sat down again, but did not stay very long; but she drank in every word I said. From this time I saw her nearly every day for about three weeks, when I was obliged to leave home for a time. Her growth in knowledge and feeling was very remarkable; very steady, without any excitement or extravagance of any kind. I always made a point of repeating and speaking principally on some one particular text,* which I thought suitable to her state, for meditation afterwards; and she once told me she did not know how it was, but the text I left with her always remained so much in her mind, and seemed just the very thing she wanted.

I repeated to her the text, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud thy sins," remarking that the innumerable tiny drops of which a cloud is made up might remind her of the unnumbered sins of thought, and heart, and life, which till now she had not observed or been conscious of, but when gathered together formed, indeed, a thick black cloud between God and her soul; but since God has said, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions;" since he has taken away the cloud which hid his face from her sight, she might now, as a believer in Jesus, look up with confidence as a reconciled child, and see only smiles and tender love and pity where she had feared to see only frowns and anger. She derived very much comfort from this text.

For a long time she could not say fully she believed she was forgiven; but she used to say she was sure a change had taken place in her; that she believed the Lord had sent me to

* I earnestly recommend this practice to all who are in the habit of visiting their poorer brethren for the purpose of instructing them, especially the sick and dying.

her in love and pity to her soul, but that she had not the assurance she wished for, but she believed the Lord would give it to her before he took her away, often adding, "You see, I believe the Lord is just a-trying of me." She evidently expected some sort of special revelation of pardon to her soul, from which notion I endeavoured to draw her, by showing her that the living Christ, as set forth in the written word of Jehovah, was to be the ground of her faith and hope; that such words as these, "Look unto me, and be ye saved;" "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," etc., were quite warrant enough to her, as a believer, that her sins were all pardoned, without any special revelation to her soul; and that in simply believing that God meant what he said, and in looking to Jesus alone, and thinking over all he had done for her, she would find peace flowing into her soul.

She often referred to our first interview, saying, after nearly a fortnight's interval, "I believe I could repeat nearly every word you said to me that day. How I did study on it!" Once she said, "How I wish you had come to me months ago." I pointed out to her that the Lord had sent me, and doubtless at the right time; and she most sweetly acquiesced in this, as she did in everything in which she could trace his hand.

She was somewhat backward in taking to herself the full comfort of the blessed tidings of salvation, though it was evident that her soul was really resting on Jesus, and on him alone, and that she was filled with love and praise and thankfulness for all he had made known to her.

I once read to her Cowper's beautiful hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood," which greatly pleased her. She never let me go without my reading or repeating it to her.

She suffered very much, but was very patient; and she once told me she could bear all and be quite happy if she could have me always with her to talk to her about Jesus. I doubt not there was much wisdom in my being removed from her for a short time before her death, as she was, perhaps, leaning too much on the creature, and the Lord would have her trust herself alone with him. The anxiety with which she watched for my visits, and earnestly implored me to come again, sufficiently showed this. I doubt not the Lord revealed himself much more fully to her soul when left alone with him, for "His glory will he not give to another."

The last time I saw her she earnestly commended her mother

to my care, and begged me to speak to her as plainly as I had done to herself. About a week after I left she died in great suffering, but I have reason to believe in "perfect peace."

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc. Reader, have you done this? Have you done it one moment of your life? Is there a day, an hour, a moment of your past life that you can lay your finger upon, and say, "Then, at that time, I loved God with all my heart?" I do not ask, Have you loved him at all? Have you loved him a little? Have you loved him as much as you could? But I ask, Have you loved him with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength? You know you have not. You know you have loved many things more than God. Then you have been living every moment of your life in disobedience to this "first and great command," in direct rebellion against God, though you knew it not, felt it not. You are verily guilty before God. I do not ask you, Have you been a murderer? a thief? a drunkard? a blasphemer? a sabbath-breaker? You may have been none of all these; you may have been very decent, and moral, and outwardly religious; but you have not loved God with all your heart as he has bidden you, and are, therefore, in danger of everlasting wrath. Oh! then, search this out. Confess it before God. Lay your guilty soul bare before him. Tell him that you know that you do not, that you cannot, love him as he requires, and seek pardon and peace, and grace and strength, where this poor woman sought it, and you shall find it too.

And to those who, through grace, do "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," I would say, Are you seeking to live up to the spirit of "this first and great commandment?" Are you giving him the first, the highest, the chief place in your hearts? Is he, in your eyes, "the chiefest among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely?" Can you say with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee." If you are earnestly aiming at this, yet mourning over the coldness of your love, remember the way to get it rekindled in your hearts is by believing his love to you. "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.—God is love."—"We love him, because he first loved us."

C. B.



THE BIT OF BACON.

You wish, my friend, to know the origin of the little meetings at my house, for reading the Scriptures to the poor in their own language, which you witnessed when you were here during your recent visit to Ireland, and I take the first opportunity of gratifying the wish. When I came to reside in this remote place, and felt my heart yearn for the people around me, who were as sheep having no shepherd, so far, at least, as instruction in the full and free salvation of the gospel was concerned, I resolved, by treating them with every kindness in my power, to try and win their confidence so far as that they should be ready to listen to me whenever an opportunity offered to speak a word in season to those who were perishing for lack of knowledge. My neighbours were not long in

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discovering my feelings towards them—so far, at least, as the desire to administer to their temporal necessities—and I soon had reason to suspect that they were inclined to take advantage of the discovery, and that I must use some caution if I would avoid imposition.

I had, one day in winter, returned from a long walk among the hills, and after dining, was settled in my arm-chair by the fireside, with writing-desk and books on the table near me, my pet cat and dog asleep on the hearthrug, and every prospect of passing a comfortable evening, when the servant came into the room to say that a man who lived about a mile distant, named Mick Sullivan, wanted to see me. I went to the kitchen where he was, and inquired his business. In that whining tone which I had learned from experience to regard with some degree of suspicion, he told me that his sister, the only daughter of his poor old father and mother, was very ill, and that she had been ordered a bit of bacon as the only remedy likely to give her any relief.

"Who ordered it?" said I, "for it seems rather a strange medicine."

"The doctor to be sure, your honour," he replied.

"What doctor? I must be certain there is no mistake before I give it."

"Why, sir, I can't just say it was the doctor, but a very knowledgeable woman said it would cure her; and so my mother, and my father too, said there was not one so likely to give it as yourself, nor so good nor so kind a gentleman to the poor in the whole country, and they told me to step over and ask your honour's housekeeper for it; and I did not mean to trouble yourself, sir, but the housekeeper says she has orders not to give such things without telling you, sir."

"She is quite right," I replied. "If what you ask for is likely to do good to your sister you shall have it with pleasure; and to ascertain that, I will go to see her, as I know something of what should be given to sick people."

"Oh! sure your honour is not in earnest," exclaimed Mick Sullivan, looking much dismayed: "it is a long walk; it is a cold night," he expostulated, as he saw me putting on a great coat; but I heeded him not, and off we went.

When we drew near to the cabin where Mick resided, he stopped. "Sir," said he, "I must ask your honour to wait here for a little while. The big dog Bran is a great rogue, and would fly at you, and tear you, before I could hinder him; so I will go round to the back door, and tie him up safe, and

then come for you ; and please, sir, don't stir till I come." I stood still, though strongly suspecting that the dog whom he had invested with the Ossianic, but not unusual name of Bran, had no existence except in Mick's own poetical imagination ; and when my guide proceeded to make his way to the rear of the house, I went on to the front, and looked in at a small window sufficiently destitute of glass to give me an opportunity of seeing and hearing all that passed inside.

There was a large turf fire, on which were placed two iron pots, one of them filled with potatoes. Round the hearth were seated the old couple to whom the cabin belonged, their only daughter, the sick lady for whose state Mick had tried to excite my sympathy, and who looked a fine personification of rosy health, and three or four others, who were neighbours and had come to visit the Sullivans. The old woman had near her a basket of cabbage, which, it seemed, she had just prepared to put down to boil, and on the table was a wooden platter filled with eggs. "Why then, Jack," said she, in her native tongue, which, you are aware, I understand, addressing one of the visitors, "it was a great thought of you to bring that cabbage, and we are obliged to you ; and more obliged to you still for staying to eat it with us. Where did you get it?"

"I will tell you then," replied Jack. "As we were all coming over to sit with you this evening, like as we used to do when the times were good, but as we seldom do now that sorrow is every where, when we were passing by Mr. Gorman's garden we saw a piece of the wall that fell in the storm last week. There was plenty of fine cabbage inside that Mr. Gorman will never use, nor give away, so we thought it only a charity to bring some of it with us."

"Well," said another, "if Micky only brings the bit of bacon from the great house, to put down with it, we'll have a snug supper together once more."

"And if he does not," replied Micky's sister, "we can boil this handful of eggs that I was going to take to the market to-morrow."

Just then the back door opened, and Mick entered. In a few words he gave intimation of the present state of affairs, and in as few the others arranged how best to meet the dilemma. The girl darted into the sleeping apartment, and got into bed, ready to act the invalid if occasion required. The basket of cabbage was placed in a corner, and the platter of eggs in a drawer, and then Mick opened the front door,

saying, "Your honour may come in now, there is no fear that the dog will hurt you."

"I am sure of that," was my reply, as I entered the dwelling, where the usual hundred thousand welcomes awaited me, notwithstanding the inauspicious circumstances under which I appeared. The party were reseated in perfect tranquillity, the visitors having assumed the aspect of comforters to the mother, who was apparently in trouble at the dangerous state of her daughter. In fact the whole scene had been so well and so quickly got up, as to furnish me with a new proof of the versatility of Irish intellect, and renew the deep regret which I often experienced when I saw the natural cleverness of my poor countrymen perverted to bad purposes for want of proper instruction.

On asking to see the invalid, the mother immediately led me to her bedside. She was beginning to give an account of her ailments, when I took her hand, and said, "Come, get up at once; you know you are quite dressed," and returned to the group in the kitchen, leading the plump rosy Katie with me. Before any one had time to express surprise, I continued, "You were preparing supper, Mrs. Sullivan; do not let my visit delay you: your daughter has no ailment to prevent her partaking of it."

"Supper, your honour!" exclaimed the mother; "to be sure the potatoes are down, for how could these poor men that are hard at work all day do without something? but in the other pot, sir, there is only water to—"

"To boil those cabbages," said I, pointing to the corner. "They look good, may I ask where you got them?"

"It was Mr. Gorman that sent them to us, sir, when he heard that—"

"Stop! stop!" I again interrupted; "it makes my blood run cold to hear you. My good friends, I am going to speak very plainly to you, and pray believe me that I do so because I love you, and am anxious about your everlasting happiness. You are all quick enough to guess that I have found out the trick you intended to play on me to get the bit of bacon. Don't be uneasy, don't apologize; I forgive you from my heart, because there is much in myself that needs forgiveness. But oh! my friends, you have offended another who hates sin. You have offended God by telling lies, which he has declared he will punish with everlasting destruction."

"We are bad enough surely, your honour," said old Sullivan, "but I don't think he'll be too hard on us."

"Sullivan," I answered, "we have but one way of knowing how God will act towards us. He has given us his book in which holy men of old wrote as God's Spirit directed, to tell us these things. Here is that book, God's own word, and I will read for you what he says about liars." I drew an Irish Bible from my pocket; uneasy looks were exchanged among my auditors till they heard a few words in their own language, and then, as I have ever found to be the case, they listened with profound attention. I read the following passages: "He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight;" "Lie not one to another." "There is," I said, "a most beautiful description of the happy place where those who are saved will dwell hereafter. We are told who those are that will not be let in there, and among them is he that 'loveth and maketh a lie.' And listen to these awful words, 'All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.'" Ps. ci. 7; Col. iii. 9; Rev. xxii. 15; xxi. 8. These words seemed to make a great impression, and, with an expression of alarm, some of my hearers crossed themselves.

"Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan," I continued, addressing myself to the old couple, "there is another commandment given to us by the great God. He says to parents, 'Train up a child in the way he should go,' Prov. xxii. 6. Now, I fear you have not done this. In one short evening you have made your son tell lies, and your daughter feign sickness, in order to deceive me."

"Oh! then that was a bad thing," observed one of their visitors. It was Jack.

I replied to him, "And was it not a bad thing of you to take these cabbages from Mr. Gorman's garden when God has commanded, 'Thou shalt not steal.'" Jack hung down his head, and silence prevailed for some minutes. I then continued:

"You said just now, Sullivan, that God would not be too hard upon us, by which you meant that he would overlook what you consider little sins. His word declares the very contrary; listen: 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,'" James ii. 10. They seemed to understand and feel this solemn declaration.

"Tell me," I said, "for you are all quite shrewd enough to know; if the magistrate who administers justice in this neighbourhood were to overlook little offences, such, for instance, as stealing some heads of cabbage, what do you think

would be the consequence?" No one spoke. "Come, Jack," said I, "tell me truly what effect would it have on you?"

Jack, with his head still hung down, but laughing a little, answered, "Why then, sir, if I thought I would not be punished, I'm afraid I'd take it the oftener."

"And would you respect the magistrate for overlooking small offences, and not enforcing the law?"

"Well then, sir, to tell the truth, I think I would not."

"Nor respect the law which was not likely to be enforced?"

"No, sir."

"Then can we for a moment suppose that God will ever suffer his holy law to be broken without punishing the transgressor? No, my friends, we have all sinned, and are all guilty before him." Their looks if not their words expressed the question, "What shall we do to be saved?" And, as well as I could, I told them the glad tidings of full and free salvation through Him who loved us and gave himself for us. I then read aloud an account of his birth from Luke's Gospel, and they listened with evident delight. I told them that I would always be happy to read for them.

"You have already, my friends," said I, "heard enough, I hope, to make you regret those bad practices which God hates. Jack, you will surely, on your way home, take back Mr. Gorman's cabbages to him. Do you, Mick Sullivan, come to my house to-morrow morning, and you shall get some that are equally good, also the bit of bacon to boil with them; and, if the Lord will, let us all meet here to-morrow evening at supper time, when I will read for you another portion of the history of Him who loved us and gave himself up for us, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. May his Holy Spirit apply these truths to our hearts."

The proposal was received with much thankfulness; the meeting took place and was established weekly. It soon increased in numbers, so that we were obliged to hold it in my barn. The priest, of course, opposed it, and I had sometimes fears that he would succeed, but he has never done so; and, as I trust to the everlasting benefit of many, my poor neighbours continue to hear, in their own tongue wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God.

E. F. G.

UNCHANGEABLE TENDERNESS OF JESUS.

THERE is a danger of its being supposed that a change has taken place in the Lord Jesus since he left this world. It is

difficult for some minds to conceive of him as still the tender-hearted, compassionate Saviour that he was on earth. What exaltation, majesty, grandeur, glory, he has inherited! you may say; there is a wide gulf now between him and me.* But are you warranted in entertaining such a view of him? Perhaps you would reply, It must be admitted by every one, that the fact of his being condescending and kind, during the time of his humiliation on earth, does not prove that he is so still, now that he is enthroned in heaven. But look at one or two circumstances recorded in connexion with him, after his resurrection, which may lead you to believe in his unchanged tenderness and love.

When "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James," having brought sweet spices to anoint Jesus, came very early in the morning to the sepulchre, after he had risen from the dead, invested with "all power in heaven and in earth," and they found "the stone rolled away,"—on entering into the sepulchre, they saw an angel, who informed them that the Saviour had risen; and he added, "Go your way; tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee." Now that message, doubtless, had been left by Jesus with the angel. Tell Peter especially. He knew Peter's sorrow. Others were not aware of the depth of his distress, but to his Lord it was perfectly known. Hence his first object after his resurrection was to send him a message, that, while it staunches the bleeding heart of the penitent, might indicate his own unchanged affection towards him.

"Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." He did not, it is true, after his resurrection, associate so familiarly with them as he had done before; but he gave them many striking and precious tokens of his deep affection, and his intense interest in their comfort and welfare. The term by which he designated them illustrates this. Before his death he said to them, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends;" but after his resurrection, he drew the cords of love still closer, and called them his brethren. "Go tell my brethren," said he, "that they meet me in Galilee." "Go tell my brethren; and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." "Thus he reserved the tenderest appellation for the last; as though he would provide against all their suspicions and fears that he would forget them, as he rose in dignity and power,

* This is in effect the ground taken by Romanists and others for the mediation and intercession of Mary and the saints.

by showing them that he loved the more, the more he did for them."

Then see him, as he enters that gathering-place of the disciples, on the evening of the first day of the week, when, with closed doors, "for fear of the Jews," they conferred together with sorrowing hearts—and standing in the midst of them, he says, "Peace be unto you," and, with significant tenderness, "shows to them his hands and his side." And observe him returning to them, "after eight days," that he might remove the unbelief of one who was absent on the previous occasion, and saying to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing;"—and say, are not these proofs of his unchanged tenderness and grace after his resurrection?

But, to remove the slightest doubt from your mind, that when Jesus left the earth his heart was as compassionate and tender as before he was crucified, listen to his last solemn command to his disciples—"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem." And remember, it was in Jerusalem that prejudice and every malignant passion had prevailed against him. Many there, who ought, on the principle of mere justice, to have shouted hosannas to him, had cried, "Away with him! crucify him!" Priests and rulers, and the infatuated people, had exulted at the sight of his sufferings and death. The voice of Jerusalem's iniquities cried to heaven for vengeance. But, now that Jesus was about to ascend his triumphal chariot, and enter heaven, he said to his disciples, "Preach the gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem." Go, tell of salvation, through my blood, first to those who shed it. Go, invite those to pardon and salvation, in my name, who despised and blasphemed it. Tell them I will forgive them—accept them—save them. Let every street and lane in Jerusalem resound with the message of my grace. And then, having announced my salvation there, proclaim to the whole world the "faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."—"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Do not these latest utterances of Jesus upon earth prove that he was still the unchanged, tender, and compassionate Saviour? And when he ascended on high, it is said he "received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

But there is no lack of proofs of his tenderness, even since

his enthronement amidst the glory of his heavenly kingdom. When the first martyr of the Christian church was standing in the council, amongst his enemies, who were thirsting for his blood, Jesus unveiled himself to his beloved disciple, and so strengthened him that he could not forbear exclaiming, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And when his enemies hurried him away from the council, in a paroxysm of rage, and stoned him, he was enabled, by the presence and grace of the Saviour, calmly to lay his bleeding brows upon his bosom, and breathe out his soul, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

So, when Christ flashed conviction across the mind of Saul of Tarsus, as he journeyed to Damascus, on an embassy of persecution, he said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—thus identifying himself with his oppressed and suffering disciples, and showing how thoroughly he sympathizes with them in all they are called to endure. Observe, too, how he compassionated Saul of Tarsus himself, in the agony of conviction. It was necessary that there should be deep compunction where there had been crimson-hued transgression. But Jesus would not allow him to suffer more than he was able to bear: hence he directed Ananias to repair to the broken-hearted penitent, with the message of his mercy and tenderness.

Subsequently, in the history of Paul, Jesus frequently expressed his tender regard for this apostle. Amongst other instances, notice when he was distressed by the "thorn in the flesh," and earnestly prayed that it might depart from him. Jesus compassionated him, and said, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and then the apostle said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." And again, when he had to stand before the arch-enemy of the Christians, Nero, and could say, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me," he added a noble testimony, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me;—and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

Now, these are but a few of the recorded expressions of the Saviour's tenderness, after he ascended to the majesty and glory of the skies. Let not the thought, then, be entertained by you for a moment, that there is the slightest abatement, in his exalted state, of his tenderness and grace. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "For in that he himself hath suffered, being

tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." "Such an High Priest became us." Whatever were the perfections that rendered him attractive and lovely while he was upon earth, the same qualities now distinguish him in heaven. "Upon his vesture and his thigh" there is the name, sparkling with the brightness of celestial glory—"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER."

Rev. J. W. Richardson.

THE CRADLE HYMN.

ONE of the promised offices of the Holy Spirit was to bring to the remembrance of the apostles whatever the Lord Jesus Christ had said to them. We, therefore, should not despise or overlook the faculty of memory, but, learning a lesson from God's word, should try to implant what is good and holy on the minds of children, trusting that even if for a time the world, and what is in the world, cover it with a veil so thick that it may seem forgotten, the time may come when some circumstance, it may be a very trivial one, will recall it to the memory. The prayers and hymns of childhood, forgotten in the hurry and bustle of the world, and during active life, have been repeated on the deathbed of the aged. He that has lived for years in heathen countries, beyond the sound of the church-going bell, can tell what he has felt when the first peal struck his ear on his return to his native land; what a crowd of recollections rushed into his mind as it recalled

"Thoughts of home and love and that sweet time
When first he heard their evening chime."

"Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain,
Awake but one, what myriads rise!"

An instance of this awakening of recollections by touching one link of the mysterious chain of memory occurred not many years since in the neighbourhood of those countries to which all eyes are turned at the present time. A German nobleman, in the service of a northern power, was travelling with a numerous suite in the north of Persia. They were a long day's journey from Karmaushah, when their road led them amongst the mountains. It was in the month of March; and whilst in the valleys spring seemed far advanced, amidst the mountains all was wintry. As they went on the air became darkened, and soon a snow shower was driving in their faces. Calculating by the rate at which they had hitherto travelled,

they expected to have soon got through the mountain passes. It was not the fault of their guides that they now found they had missed the road, for the snow-storm into which they were riding had covered and hidden the track.

At an hour when they expected to have been housed in a comfortable dwelling, they found themselves on the bare hill-side, with no means of refreshment for themselves or their horses. Hungry and tired as they were, they determined to halt and wait the clearing of the atmosphere ere they attempted the dangerous descent of the hill. They, therefore, rested under shelter of some of the high rocks. At last the air cleared, the sun shone forth, and they saw before them a beautiful valley surrounded by hills, down which ran several streams, which, uniting, formed a river through the vale. The volumes of smoke which rose from some spots proved that the dwellings of men were scattered here and there.

One of the younger of the party, who was a stranger to the habits and manners of the country, exclaimed in delight, "Oh how glad I am to see that hospitable roof! We shall probably find a comfortable resting-place at that large building there. It must belong to the chieftain of the valley."

"The hospitable roof indeed!" said the German nobleman, who knew more of the manners of the people. "You know little of the inhabitants of these mountains and valleys, or of their rulers. Fist-law governs here; nor need we Germans be too severe in our judgment on those who know not Christianity if we remember the robber knights who inhabited castles along the Rhine, the ruins of which still remain, and who led such lawless lives long after the light of Christianity had shone on that country. The chiefs of these mountains resemble those robber knights, with this difference, that the various families or tribes are at peace among themselves, and only pillage strangers. They fall on passing caravans and single travellers, and rob them of their goods and arms, but seldom kill them—never, unless opposed in their attempt at robbery. Such are the men on whose hospitality you are counting. There is, however, something unaccountable in their conduct, for there are many instances of their treating passing travellers with kindness and hospitality. Let us hope it may be our case. There would be no use in our attempting to resist, should they attack us, for even their wives and daughters are taught the use of arms."

The travellers set forward on their descent into the valley, and the horses, as if they scented the warm stable where they

were to rest, hastened their pace towards the village, surrounded by fields and gardens. They approached the large building already spoken of, which struck them as resembling a feudal castle, with its high walls and towers. There could be no doubt of its being the chieftain's castle, and the cavalcade entered through the open gate into the court-yard. Scarcely had they got in when a respectable, strong-looking, elderly man approached, and addressed them courteously in Persian. He was accompanied by several younger men. These were the lord of the castle and his sons. They bade the strangers welcome, invited them to dismount, and offered to take charge of their horses. The officers gave their horses and fire-arms to their own attendants, warning them in German to be on their guard, whilst they followed their host into the interior of their dwelling.

A large hall seemed prepared for guests. The walls and the floor were covered with carpets of various colours, and the richest stuffs were thrown over various pieces of furniture, without any regard to order or arrangement, as if to be shown and displayed in a warehouse. There was no need to ask where these European goods had been procured; it was very evident they were the spoils of caravans. The old chief invited the strangers to be seated on the divans, covered with the richest gold and silver embroidered silks; and some servants soon entered with a cup of coffee for each of the strangers, some preserved fruits, and pipes and tobacco.

The German officer who seemed so well acquainted with the manners of the people now said to his companions, "You may safely lay aside your swords and pistols. I would now pledge myself for your safety and that of your property, for you are guests of the house, and as such your host would himself defend you from danger as if you were his blood relations."

Although the conversation between the host and his guests could only be carried on through an interpreter, yet on both sides it soon became free and unconstrained; and they felt so much at ease, that some rose from their seats and strolled about the halls and courtyard. In a long narrow room all sorts of weapons and fire-arms were hung on the walls and pillars. On examining them they proved to be the workmanship of countries far distant from each other.

On the chief being asked how he had contrived to get such a variety in that secluded valley, he frankly answered, "Some were sent me as the spoils of war from my eldest son, who is

in foreign service; and the others we got from passing travellers, who, as their numbers were fewer than ours, gave them up without dispute. You must know that when friends visit us as you have done, kindly and openly, we are glad to see them, and their company enlivens our solitude, and makes variety for us. When, on the contrary, they pass without taking notice of us, and try to elude our observation, we go forth and take something as a memorial of them. Generally we take only their arms, their beasts of burden, and any mercantile wares they may have; but at times we take their fine clothes as gifts to our wives and daughters. We then let them pass on safely."

While this old robber thus confessed his mode of obtaining what he wished for without the slightest shame, or any apparent consciousness of its dishonour, one of those who had strayed into the courtyard returned into the hall, and called the attention of his companions to a most interesting scene without. The women servants of the fortress were busied at the large well in the courtyard, and amongst them was a young girl of about fourteen or fifteen, who, as well as the other women, both slaves and free, was unveiled, and whose fair complexion and light hair were a strong contrast to the dark eyes and black hair of those around her, whilst she spoke their language, and seemed unconscious of any difference.

A groom, of pious and godly character, belonging to the German nobleman, was watering his horse at the well; and whilst doing so was singing the evening hymn of his native Wurtemberg. As verse after verse was sung in a loud voice, as if the man thought only of his own feelings, and paid no attention to those around him, for some time none of the maid-servants took any notice; but at length the fair-haired girl started as if something unusual had seized her attention. She seemed agitated by some strange feeling; and, setting down her water-pitcher, stood beside the groom, silently staring at him. Then she knelt, and, folding her hands in the attitude of prayer, tried to sing a few notes and words of the hymn; but sobs and tears prevented her. The old Wurtemberger's attention was now drawn to her, and he spoke a few words to her in his native tongue, the only language he knew; and the girl, with a smile of joy which contradicted her tears, pointed to herself, saying, "Yes,—Jane."

The man continued to address her, and she answered by a few unconnected words, among which were, however, father,

mother, Barbara, Anna, Maria, plainly to be distinguished; and she stretched out her hand towards the north.

While this was passing, the whole travelling party had come into the yard. "If I am not mistaken," said one of the officers, "this girl will prove to be the daughter of one of those natives of Wurtemberg, who, some years ago, attempted to form a settlement in a fertile region of the Caucasus, but were ruined by an unexpected inroad of Tartars, and some of them carried off, no one knew whither."

The old chief and his sons had by this time joined the assembly round the well. The leader of the party asked him, through the interpreter, how the girl happened to be in his household. The chief answered, without the slightest hesitation or embarrassment, that he had bought her from a slave-merchant for a pair of old pistols of very little value. She was at that time, he said, quite a child, and spoke a language which nobody understood, and he had not asked the slave-dealer anything about her, so he could give no information as to where she came from.

The worthy and pious groom continued speaking to the girl, who listened with a pleased and smiling countenance, and gradually a few more words came to her recollection, and a few broken sentences were formed. He slowly repeated a few words and expressions of the dialect of his own province, and she showed by signs and by touching the objects he named that she understood him. It seemed plain that she was the daughter of Wurtemberg parents, and probably of some of those colonists who had attempted to settle in the Caucasus.

The old chief did not refuse to part with the girl when offered a fine musket and a sword with a costly handle in exchange for her; and in making choice of them from amongst a number, he showed himself a competent judge of such articles.

The guests were treated with the utmost kindness, slept upon the most luxurious beds, with every comfort and accommodation the castle afforded, and, after a plentiful meal next morning, set forward on their journey, accompanied part of the way by the sons of the old chief.

The fair-haired girl travelled with them, confided to the care of the groom, whose song had led to her being of the party. She gradually remembered more of the language of her early childhood; but her recollections of home were few and indistinct. She could recall the image of some one bending over her and singing; and she even repeated two verses of the song, from which it was supposed that it was her

mother whose figure she thus recollected, singing in a sweet tone,

“How much better thou’rt attended
Than the Son of God could be,
When from heaven he descended,
And became a child like thee!

Soft and easy is thy cradle;
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay:
When his birth-place was a stable,
And his softest bed was hay.”

The groom recognised this as part of Luther’s cradle hymn, with which the mothers of his native province often lull their babes to rest. The girl also gradually recollected the Lord’s Prayer; but this was the whole she could recall to memory.

When they got to the end of their journey the nobleman caused inquiry to be made amongst the colonists spoken of, and it was found that a girl called Jane, with her sisters Barbara and Anna Maria, had been carried off by the Tartars. The two sisters had been ransomed and restored to their parents; but Jane had not been discovered, and it was supposed had died. The groom was allowed to escort her home to her parents, and he never could speak without emotion of her meeting with them and her sisters. “Oh,” he said, “one could better understand the parable of the lost son after witnessing such a scene. The parents esteemed her lost, and she was found; they thought her dead, and she was alive.”

But what power there was in that evening hymn and that cradle hymn! What a blessing upon the habit of singing to the Lord, as was the custom of that girl’s home, and of the groom! The officers all about her had spoken to each other in their native German; the girl understood not a word. The servants had spoken to their horses in provincial dialect; she heard, without knowing what they said: but when the hymn which had been sung at her cradle struck her ear, her mind and memory were at once aroused; thoughts of home, of parents and sisters, and happy recollections of childhood, were awakened. Happy are the children on whose hearts and memories are early imprinted good and holy thoughts. As in this girl they may be put aside, unthought of amidst other scenes and companions; but where such seeds are sown in the heart, they may yet be called forth by Providence and by grace, and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. E. M. P.

HOME REVIEWS.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"I AM afraid, papa, that we have rather a hard task for you this evening," said Richard Travers to his father; "nothing less than a review of the great Sir Walter Scott's works. We have, if you approve, decided on reading some of them by way of recreation after the study of Paley's works, in which, by your recommendation, we have been engaged with much enjoyment."

"It is, indeed, a serious undertaking that you assign me, my dear children," Mr. Travers replied, "and acknowledged to be such by those whose abilities are more equal to the task than mine. I remember to have heard a minister of distinguished talents, who was about to address a young man's association on the character and writings of Sir Walter Scott, observe, 'To speak, as I shall now be expected to do, of genius, magnificent, yet fallen and erring; genius, withal unconsecrated, because unemployed upon any subject closely connected with man's restoration from the fall; to do this without either too highly exalting it when we contemplate its splendour, or unduly depreciating it when we consider its defects, is no very easy, perhaps I should say no very possible task.' I can now feel the force of the remark," Mr. Travers continued, with a smile, "since you have placed me in the position which called it forth."

"But, papa," said Emma, "I do not think that, on the present occasion, there can be much danger of your too highly exalting the genius with which you have to do."

"Perhaps not, my little Emma; but there may be some danger that your enthusiastic admiration of that same genius might prevent your discerning the faults into which it has fallen. For this reason I shall try to point some of them out. I feel most anxious, my children, that you should strive to acquire a habit of exercising your judgment impartially when indulging in the gratification of taste or the acquisition of knowledge by the perusal of the most admired authors; otherwise there must ever be danger of your calling that which is evil good."

"I am afraid," said Richard, "that to exercise an impartial judgment is difficult when the mind is under the spell of such an enchanter as Sir Walter Scott."

"It is, my son; and we feel averse to finding any fault with what delights us: but there is the greater necessity for

acquiring the habit I have referred to, and bringing all that we read or hear 'to the law and to the testimony,' remembering that, 'if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,'" Isa. viii. 20.

"Papa," said Emma, "Richard spoke as if our minds require recreation after the deeper studies which we had been engaged in. Do you think that this is really the case? and, if so, is such light reading as Sir Walter Scott's fictions lawful for a Christian to indulge in?"

"That the mind requires relaxation after any great mental exertion I have no doubt; but your second question is one which I have more difficulty in replying to. Many excellent Christians object altogether to the perusal of works of fiction; while others, whom we must suppose equally spiritually minded, see nothing wrong in occasionally gratifying a refined taste in this way. There not being, that I am aware of, any rule laid down in Scripture exactly applying to the case, I would say, let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind."

"But what is your own opinion on this point, papa?"

"Well, my children, I think that much indulgence in light literature of any sort is not only at variance with the command, 'Redeem the time,' but has, in many ways, an exceedingly injurious effect upon the mind. You know I have often warned you, and now do so again, against novel-reading in general as a most seductive and dangerous amusement. Still, I do not see how we can support the opinion that the reading of works of fiction of every kind is to be condemned. We must in each case be guided by the character of a work. With reference to those of Sir W. Scott I cannot say that I think it wrong to read them, with a view to unbend the mind after more arduous and serious study—and for such a purpose only do I conceive it allowable to do so; for there are few which you will find more free from harm than the writings of Sir Walter Scott. You will there learn nothing that is immoral, but a good deal that is true and needful to be known."

"Do you refer to his prose or his poetical compositions, papa?" inquired Anne.

"To both; but, perhaps, the remark is peculiarly appropriate to the poems. Of these the gifted author was heard to say that they contained 'no line which, dying, he would wish to blot;' and for simplicity, purity, and truthfulness I believe they are not excelled. Nor would I hesitate to place them in the hands of a youthful reader in preference to most compositions which possess the deficiency I have before referred to,

and do not touch upon the most important and delightful of all subjects."

"Do not these observations apply equally to his prose fictions, papa? Are not they also unexceptionable?" said Emma.

"I think not. Although, in this department of literature, Sir Walter has immeasurably distanced all competitors, and although, by means of them, he has conferred a benefit in having created and fostered a taste both in writers and readers of that species of light literature, which has caused many of them to turn with disgust from the extravagant and improbable, still I cannot speak of his prose fictions with unqualified approbation."

"Well, papa, judging by such of them as I have read, I am at a loss to imagine what you can have discovered in them that is objectionable," observed Richard.

"First, then, I object that oaths and blasphemous expressions are often put into the mouths of the speakers, which must ever most painfully grate upon the Christian's ear. His defence of duelling, and introduction of its practice uncensored, are very objectionable. Then, if you have read 'Woodstock,' or that interesting tale entitled 'Old Mortality,' you must surely have remarked how scriptural quotations and allusions are often introduced in circumstances so ridiculous, that it makes a most painful impression upon a mind accustomed to regard the word of God with any portion of that reverence which is its due."

"But, papa, would not Sir Walter's sketches of the Puritans and of the Covenanters in these stories have been incomplete if he had not put this peculiar language into their mouths?"

"I fear so; for though many who used it were doubtless zealous and devoted disciples of the Lord, still I cannot but think the quaint and familiar manner in which the words of holy writ were introduced into their conversation had an evil tendency. Omitting it would, therefore, have made the portraiture of character incomplete; but surely you will at once perceive that the danger of painting an inadequate likeness would scarcely furnish an excuse for doing what was wrong."

"Certainly not, papa," replied Emma; "and I will own that I have sometimes felt how unpleasant it was to have a passage of God's word associated in my mind with what was ridiculous by means of those peculiar phrases which Sir Walter introduces into his works."

"It is, indeed, unpleasant, and even painful to those who

feel that word to be 'a light unto their feet and a lamp unto their path.' It is, however, pleasant to think that our gifted author, while on the whole adhering to a tone of pure morality, never wilfully or designedly speaks of religious truths but with becoming reverence."

"Well, papa, you will also acknowledge that much useful historical knowledge may be acquired, and in a very pleasant way, from his historical novels?"

Mr. Travers shook his head, saying, "I fear that you will deem me too severe a critic when I cannot give your favourite author unqualified praise, even in this particular. It is obvious that, in writing these tales, Sir Walter never hesitated to make history yield to fiction; so that if you depend upon them as a source of historical information your knowledge will be very inaccurate."

"Was not Sir Walter Scott a very amiable man, papa?"

"Remarkably so. I have seldom heard of a more excellent character among those of whom we could not have a confident assurance that they were the subjects of that vital change produced by the reception of gospel principles. His biography, written by his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, is one of the most interesting works of the kind that I have ever read; and I would recommend you all not to miss an opportunity of reading it. The end is melancholy, but contains a striking lesson, illustrating the truth of the royal preacher's assertion, that 'all is vanity.' All, which has nothing for its object beyond the boundaries of this present mutable scene."

"Well, papa," said Richard, "while we enjoy these delightful works we shall, I hope, do so with the caution you recommend."

"I hope so, my dears. And now I do not think that I can more appropriately close my remarks than by a quotation from the lecture * on this subject to which I have already referred: 'Would that we could speak more highly of the productions of this surpassing genius; but we may not, for we cannot but lament that it was employed so exclusively upon the adornment of "the life that now is;" that its glorious light was never shed where light can alone be truly said to be glorious, where its rays would have been undimmed by passing through a polluted medium, untarnished by falling upon gross, unsightly things.' If, after reading the eventful history of this remarkable man, any of you are stimulated by the example of

* By Rev. Richard Chester, at a meeting of the Young Men's Association, Cork.

his many noble and endearing qualities to try, in these respects, to be like him, it will be well. But how much better, if any of you are warned by his resultless, unsatisfying, and most disappointed life—his hopeless, clouded, broken-hearted death—to build your hopes for time and for eternity upon a loftier and a surer foundation than earth affords, even upon the one Foundation that God has laid, and than which none can lay another. If so, our little home review this evening shall not have been in vain."

THE DAY AFTER THE FAIR.

TO BE READ THE DAY BEFORE.

BREAKFAST time had arrived at No. 9, Rowland-street, in a country town, and the master of the house was very anxious to have his morning meal. Usually, it was all ready as regularly as the sun, at a quarter to eight: but this morning every thing was in confusion, and it was not till some minutes past eight, that breakfast was ready, and then not in very good order. The reason for all this disorder was, that the servant who had lived with them for three years, and in whom her employers had put much confidence, was missing: and so the care of the children, and of all the household affairs, devolved on the mistress. The fact was, Jane had gone to the fair the day before, and had not yet come back. True, she had gone with the permission of her master and mistress, but with strict injunctions to be home at eight o'clock. They had gone themselves, and taken the two elder children with them, in the afternoon, and on their return, Jane went off with a friend, a showy young woman, with whom she had recently formed an acquaintance. Both were in high spirits, and the last words Jane was heard to say were, "I will be sure to be home in good time." She fully meant it, but did not consider the danger of entering into temptation.

The clock struck eight, but the parting promise was not fulfilled. Time rolled on—nine, ten, eleven, and no Jane. At midnight, the vexed mistress retired to rest, but could not sleep, partly on account of the discordant din of the fair, which could be heard in the distance, but still more in consequence of the vexing thoughts and fears which haunted her mind. Morning came, but the absent servant came not. Where was she? Alas! that fatal night! The foolish girl, led astray by her new companion, had drunk deep of what they call pleasure; time passed away unobserved; she was led on step by step, till

at length she was betrayed and ruined, and resolved she would return to her comfortable place of service no more. There she was respected and loved, for the children were much attached to her: but how could she go back now? how could she go to her parents' house?—and so, yielding to the voice of evil counsel, she resolved to go forward in the path of sin, come what would. And what could come but guilt, misery, and probably a wretched death? And now, who shall describe the useless regret of her employers? Too late they blamed themselves for letting her go, and for setting the example by going themselves. Who shall portray the agony of the sober, industrious parents of the lost girl, when the whole truth concerning their beloved child was told them? And who shall paint the future of the wretched young woman herself? And the cause of all this mischief and misery was the FAIR.

It was nearly the hour when dinner should have been on the table, in a small cottage in Albert-lane. The little children looked wistfully into the mother's face, and asked for something to eat. Tears gushed into her eyes, her heart yearned over her suffering little ones, but she had no bread to give them, and no money to purchase any. A heavy sound as of hard breathing was heard in the next room. It was the father of this starving group; he was not suffering from any disease, but he had been all night at the fair; yes, he had been there for the three preceding nights, and had spent money enough to have kept his family for a fortnight, for he was a good workman and could earn a great deal of money when sober. He had not only spent his wages, but had even stripped the house of several things, in order to gratify his wicked passions; and now his children want bread. The father of the drunken fair-frequenter, who was a sober sort of man, had taken him there when he was a boy; surely there could be no harm in it then, and to the fair he would go every year, and enjoy himself, as he called it, while his poor family were starving. How many have acted thus! Yet parents still pursue this evil course, and influence their children to do the same, and to send the mischief down to coming generations.

Supper time had come in a pleasant cottage near the roadside, not far from the place where the fair was held. A considerable party had gathered round the table, and the subject of conversation, during supper, was the fair which was just finished. All said that they were very glad that it was over; all agreed that the whole thing was a great nuisance, complaining that it brought all the riffraff of the neighbourhood

together; that people were afraid of having their houses robbed; that decent females could not for some days venture out after night-fall; and all concluded, that it would be a good thing for the neighbourhood if it were quite done away. Each one of the company had a tale to tell of something wrong that had happened, and some said there were many degrading crimes, acts of brutal violence, and words of indecency and blasphemy, too bad to be uttered. Yet, strange to say, almost every one in that company had patronized that wicked fair by going to it in the early part of the day; and each could tell of persons among the gentry and military, who had been there also, while tradesmen, and some of them very respectable people, had been seen there in considerable numbers.

At length, one of the company, who had sat silent for a time, asked, "Can any one mention a single good thing connected with the fair? We have heard much respecting the harm done by it; what good has it ever done, or is it capable of doing any?"

Not one present could answer the plain question, and all sat silent. At length, one observed, "Certainly we got no particular harm by going there, but I fear that we set a bad example; we have encouraged others to go, and so we are in a measure responsible for all the injury which others have got by going. This observation led to an animated conversation, and the result was that most present agreed that they would go there no more, and that they would endeavour to hinder others from going. Let me advise the reader to come to the same resolution, and to adopt the same course.

The fair! Surely the unclean spirits of darkness must hover over it, and the curse of God rests upon it, and the blood of ruined men and women cry out against it.

Some Christian missionaries, who have gone there to warn others and distribute tracts, have said, that when night closes over the scene, the fair, and the neighbourhood around it, present a scene too bad to be described, and that the results which have come to their knowledge have been most distressing. Reader, stand clear of this abomination, which seems to invite the thunderbolts of God. Mothers, fathers, children, servants, go not near the fair. You may have seeds sown there, or you may sow seeds in others, which may produce a fearful crop of misery. Let no reasoning induce you, no example seduce you, to go to a place so fraught with mischief.

The writer of this tract once passed along the high road

close by a field where for many successive generations a large fair had been annually held—a fair which he can testify from personal knowledge has been productive of all the evils referred to in the preceding observations. The thought darted into his mind as he walked by the scene of so much sin, Where are those persons now who thronged this place of sinful pleasure many years ago? The question was terrible to pursue. Alas! what a preparation for eternity is a fair! What a school in which to learn how to die!

The day after the fair, and the day after every other scene of sinful enjoyment, must come; and when the season of sensual excitement is over, which do you think will have the most pleasing reflections—those who have taken wise counsel and stayed away, or those who have rejected it and followed “a multitude to do evil?”

Remember also, reader, that the hour after your death will come, and the day after your funeral will come; and where, oh! where will be your eternal dwelling place? As the fair cannot be the way to heaven, so neither will stopping away from this or any other sinful worldly amusement be enough to take you there. Many content themselves with very slight grounds for their hope of heaven. They will talk much of what they have not done. They have not been drunken or dishonest, or disorderly people, and therefore they hope that God will have mercy on them. Vain hope! Abstaining from outward sins may do yourself and others good, as regards this life, but neither these things, nor any good thing which you can do, can avail for the salvation of your soul. To be saved, you must, not only stay away from Satan's fair, but you must go to Christ. Hearken to his voice, and receive his blessings, fall in with his proposals, yield yourself to him with a living faith, and whatever may have been your history and conduct in the past, all shall be well for the future. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness” Isaiah lv. 1, 2. “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed,” John vi. 27.

J. C.

THE LOST SAVED.

SEVERAL years ago we were crossing the Atlantic Ocean. One afternoon the passengers were sitting in the cabin, when we heard a cry, the most fearful that ever rings through the ship, "A man overboard!" We flew to the deck, and there saw struggling in the water a cabin-boy, who a few moments before had gone out on the bowsprit to bring in a seaman's clothes, and had been swept off by a powerful wave. He saw it coming and tried to hold on, but his little arms were too weak for a mighty billow. The wind was blowing almost a gale, the sea ran high, and the waves were roaring. As the ship flew before the blast, the boy was every instant drifting further away from us. The scene at this moment baffles description. The whole ship's company and passengers were gathered on deck—women crying, and all in consternation that they could not instantly snatch him from a watery grave. The voice of the captain rang through the ship, ordering the boats to be let down, and the ship to be put about. The mate and a couple of stout sailors sprang into the boat, and it was lowered away. In an instant she touched the sea, and with long and swift strokes of the oars the seamen drove her through the water. It was a pull for life.

The boy by this time had drifted a long way astern. We saw him afar off, a mere speck upon the waters, now altogether lost from sight, and now tossed up into view by a wave. The boat grew smaller in the distance. Rising and falling with the waves, it sometimes almost sank out of view. How great was the anxiety with which we followed the boat! At length it seemed to approach the distant speck; a motion was made as if men were catching at something in the water—as if they were pulling something on board. And then the boat turned its head toward the ship. As yet we could not see distinctly whether the boy had been picked up or had sunk. The boat came alongside, and was hoisted up by the side of the ship, with the hearty pulls of almost all on board. We were not quite sure of the result, till we saw the mate step on the deck, wrapping in his strong arms a wet, shivering, almost dead boy. Never did we experience such a feeling of relief as at that moment. A murmur of approbation and joy, though almost choked with tears, ran through the ship—a thrill like that which runs through heaven when a human soul, shipwrecked and about to perish, is rescued and brought back to God.

And is not every man somewhat in the situation of that boy, struggling on the sea of life? And when one is saved from the billows which threaten to engulf him, there goes up from those on high, who are spectators of the scene, a shout like the sound of many waters.

N. Y. E.

THE FACTORY GIRL; OR, "THE ONLY REFUGE."

WHILE walking homewards through a thickly-peopled part of a manufacturing town, a widow asked for help on behalf of her daughter, by whose industry alone she had been for many years supported, but whom disease had rendered incapable of further exertion. Being interested by the widow's tale of sorrow, I took the opportunity of finding her out; nor was I long in doing so—a kind Providence directed my steps and brought me to her. I asked more particularly about her daughter; whereupon the mother conducted me to her room. There I found, lying upon a bed of sickness, a poor factory girl, of about twenty-three years old, whose physical strength and energies rheumatic fever had entirely prostrated.

After inquiring about her bodily sufferings, and expressing sympathy with her in her affliction, I tried to ascertain what were her prospects beyond the grave, when, alas! I learned that, like many others of her race, this immortal spirit was standing on the verge of life, to all appearance unsaved and unfitted for the better country above. The all-important business of the soul's salvation had rarely been the subject of her thoughts. Though, when younger, she had received instruction at a Sunday-school, the sabbaths of her maturer years had seldom witnessed her attendance at a place of worship, and she confessed herself to be indeed a careless sinner.

I endeavoured to show both the mother and the daughter the folly of living unprepared for death and the future state, and to point out God's sparing mercy and compassion in still affording them time and opportunity for repentance. In private conversation with the poor girl, I directed her attention to Christ our only refuge, the great atoning sacrifice for sin; reminding her how God had manifested alike his great abhorrence of sin, and his great love to us in giving his only Son to die, that we, through faith in him, might be saved from condemnation for sin, and from its power. I urged her to repentance, and to earnestness in seeking the "pearl of great price," pardon and salvation, and the gift of the Holy Spirit for Christ's sake. I closed my visit by pleading with God on

her behalf, promising to provide her with some instructive books and relief to her temporal necessities.

After this interview I continued to pay her frequent visits, and always found her glad to see me, and ready to listen to my efforts to instruct her, and to the portions of Scripture which I read; tears of contrition and vows of amendment proving that her mind was awakened and her feelings aroused, and leading to the hope that the sword of the Spirit had pierced her conscience, and that Divine grace was melting her heart; nor did I doubt the efficacy of the balm of Gilead to heal the wound. She often acknowledged the hand of a gracious God in this affliction, saying how different would be the course of her future life if spared to dwell longer on earth.

Her mother informed me that she frequently asked for her Bible, and seemed fond of poring over its sacred pages, though for some time she failed to realize its saving truths. In this state of mind weeks passed over, and without any material improvement in her health. Though the fever was abated, there lingered still a disease which nature could not shake off, and her case became less and less hopeful.

One Saturday afternoon the widow came to my residence in much distress, begging me to go immediately to her daughter, who, she feared, was dying. I complied with her request, and hastened to their dwelling. It was evident that a change had taken place. The poor girl was suffering intensely, both bodily and mentally, and wept much because, as she said, she was not prepared to die. "And why are you afraid of death?" said I. "Oh, because of my sins, my sins!" she replied. I was thankful for the deep concern she manifested, and rejoiced to tell her the glorious tidings that "God hath laid help upon One who is mighty to save," even the Lamb of God, that taketh away all sin. On this blessed, faithful Redeemer—on this merciful, covenant-keeping God—I encouraged her to trust; to lay her sins on Him, who, having been once bruised for our iniquities, chastised for our peace, is now willing, waiting, and ready to speak the reconciling word, and to receive the penitent sinner into his family. I referred her to the thief on the cross, who, in the eleventh hour, exercising faith in the sinless Saviour, whom he saw suffering the same ignominious death as himself, cried, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," and received the gracious reply, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But I was not then to have the satisfaction of witnessing her entrance into the liberty of the children of

God : she was unable to exercise that act of self-appropriating faith which cries,—

“Jesus, the Lamb of God, hath bled ;
He bore my sins upon the tree ;
Beneath my curse he bowed his head ;
’Tis finish’d ! he hath died for me ;”

and I left her in much and deep anxiety. And, oh, what a lesson I had learned of the value and importance of early piety, of seeking the mercy and favour of God while in health and strength, and of securing to ourselves, by humble faith, a mansion with the blest, ere sickness and disease have wasted the earthly tabernacle. How great is the folly of those who, spending the vigour of youth in sinful disobedience of God’s laws and neglect of his love, never bestow a thought on the weighty matters of eternity, till, forsaken by health, the probability of death, and of meeting an angry Judge, wrings from them the important question, “What must I do to be saved?” Oh that some of these careless ones had witnessed the painful anxiety of Sarah F—; surely they would have learned wisdom, and not have delayed “to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near.” But He who has declared that “He delighteth not in the death of a sinner,” but had rather that all would turn, repent, and live, did not permit death to hurry this seeking soul into eternity without the assured hope of glory. Again she rallied, and a few more weeks were added to her pilgrimage here.

Thinking that the prayers and advice of others might prove an assistance to her, I requested the town missionary and a pious female who lived near to visit her. A week or two afterwards, on my entering the apartment, I was struck with her altered appearance, her former sorrowful, anxious countenance being exchanged for a happy peaceful smile, which seemed expressive of a glorious change within. Such, indeed, was the cheering reality. From sin, fear, and darkness she had found in Christ a refuge: she had been enabled to cast a believing look at Calvary’s cross; had beheld there Christ, “the Lamb slain;” and in those bleeding wounds had the poor factory girl found sure and steadfast ground for her soul’s anchor.

Thus rejoicing in God her Saviour, with gratitude which flowed from her heart, and waiting the summons to join the ransomed family above, she lingered for a few more weeks, during which time her answers to my inquiries as to whether she felt Christ to be her Saviour and Redeemer were always

satisfactory. The words, "sweet Jesus," often fell from her lips, and her remarks to her mother were full of confidence in the Divine goodness. Begging her not to weep, she would say, "God will take care of you, and teach you what to do."

On one occasion, when her friends would have thought her far too weak for such an effort, she sang one or two verses of that beautiful hymn, "My God, the spring of all my joys," and another by Dr. Watts. As God not unfrequently strengthens the faith of his dying children by giving them a glimpse of the glory that awaits them, so she often seemed to be thus favoured. On the last of her earthly sabbaths some kind people gathered around her bed to sing and pray and read the book she loved, which seemed to cause her real enjoyment.

After this, as she approached her end, she was seldom quite sensible; and on Wednesday morning her happy spirit took its flight to swell throughout an endless existence the song of praise to her Redeemer.

On the incidents now related my mind dwells with peculiar pleasure and thankfulness to Almighty God that his providence ever guided me to the home of Sarah F—; and especially do I adore the riches of his sovereign grace manifested in the salvation of this brand plucked from the burning: and glad shall I be if what has afforded to my humble efforts to bring sinners to Christ such an encouraging incentive, should stimulate others to seek for similar opportunities of extending the Redeemer's cause, looking for their reward to Him who has promised that "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." While to any reader who may be as yet careless and indifferent, may the danger, the anxiety, and the happy end of Sarah F— speak, by the mercy and grace of God, with an irresistible voice of warning, impelling him or her to seek now an interest in the blood of Christ, a refuge in the Divine Saviour, and a title to a glorious mansion in the realms above.

My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.

In darkest shades if he appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul's sweet morning star,
And he my rising sun.

L. F. F.



"PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN."

"I SHALL give you another week, Martin, and you will just think over what I have said. I have no wish to discharge you; but if you persist in this course——"

Squire Woodlands did not complete his sentence in words, but he gave an emphatic gesture and look which sufficiently explained his meaning to the poor man, who stood, hat in hand, by his horse's side. They had met on the outskirts of the squire's park. It was a fine Saturday evening in spring. The squire was riding homewards to dinner; the man—his second gardener—was on his way from work.

"I trust you will give me a hearing, sir?" Philip Martin began, humbly and hesitatingly; but he was cut short by his master.

"No, no; I haven't time now to listen to your preaching, and one word is as good with me as a hundred. You know my mind, and that is enough; at any rate, if you have anything to say, you may say it next Saturday night. I shall expect your answer then:" and, without waiting for the reply, or remonstrance, or whatever else it might be, which trembled on the poor man's lips, he touched his fine riding-horse with his whip, and a minute afterwards turned in at his park gate.

The gardener stood still, as though rooted to the spot, looking after the squire, until he had disappeared; even then he waited till the last faint clatter of the horse's hoofs had died away in the distance, and then he slowly moved onwards. If any one had been by at that moment, and narrowly watched him, he might have been seen to cast his eyes upwards for one short minute before he turned on his way homeward, and his lips would have been observed to move, though no sound escaped them. Perhaps a tear might have been seen to glisten in his eye, too; but if there was one, he hastily brushed it away.

Mr. Woodlands was a large landed proprietor; almost the whole of the parish belonged to him, and much of the adjoining parishes also. He was a man of respectable character, but he was evidently ungodly; God was not in his thoughts, and he had a strong aversion to any serious profession of the religion of Jesus Christ. He did not like the humbling doctrines of the gospel; he knew nothing, and he wished to know nothing about them. The language of the apostle Paul was exactly applicable to him:—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. It was on these grounds that he had fastened a quarrel on his gardener.

The squire, as he was commonly called, was not naturally perhaps an arbitrary man, but it is difficult for any one to feel that he has almost unlimited authority over numerous dependents and not be tempted sometimes to abuse that authority, especially if such a one should be very little under the influence of that blessed and elevating code of divine morals which enjoins masters to give unto their servants that which is just and equal, knowing that they themselves have a Master in heaven, Col. iv. 1. And thus it had come to pass, that though the squire was, in some respects, liberal, and in some cases charitable, according to the common but incorrect ac-

ception of the word "charity;" he was feared rather than loved. If he was not altogether a hard and unjust master, he was an exacting and despotic one; his will was law, and it was very difficult to conciliate him when once he had taken offence.

Philip Martin was comparatively a young man. He had worked for Mr. Woodlands ever since he was a lad. He was the son of an old tenant farmer, who had fallen into reduced circumstances, and died in poverty when Philip was a boy; and the squire had been kind to the orphan, in noticing him, sending him to school, and eventually in taking him into his service in his gardens, where he had given satisfaction, and had become particularly clever in the management of greenhouse flowers.

A year or two before the date of our story no one would have supposed that Philip and his master would ever have had a misunderstanding on the subject of religion, for the gardener was as careless and indifferent about his soul as can well be imagined, and was, in fact, very much disposed at times to be wild and dissipated, as well as habitually profane. There was but little, alas! in the circumstances by which he was surrounded to awaken or deepen any good impressions in his mind. The village was a godless one; there was a form of godliness, to be sure, in the single weekly service of the house of God. The Scriptures and prayers were read, but in a very hurried and careless way, while the gospel never ascended higher than the reading-desk; indeed, the character of the minister may be understood from his frequent custom, after the service was over, of passing on to the village green, sometimes in company with the squire, and there standing to witness and applaud the sports of the village youths, as they profaned the day of rest by cricket, or foot-ball, or quoits.

Mr. Woodlands wished it to be so. He would have been sadly chagrined if a minister of another stamp had had the cure of souls in his parish, and as the living was in his gift, he had taken care to keep out of it one who, understanding and feeling experimentally the value of real religion, would have watched for souls "as those who must give account."

Philip Martin had been one of the best cricketers in the parish, and as cricketing, even at proper times and seasons, often leads to excess in drinking, he had, unhappily, partially given way to this degrading and ruinous habit. This, however, the squire, his master, had overlooked, or, at most, met with a slight reprimand.

In these, his irreligious and thoughtless days, Philip had

married, and his wife was as gay and thoughtless as himself. He had good wages, and a pleasant cottage to live in, however; and, as he was industrious in the main, his circumstances had ever been comfortable, and he was looked upon as a respectable young man, and as having a permanent situation for life as one of the squire's gardeners; indeed, in process of time, he might reasonably hope, with due care on his part, to rise to the position—and an enviable one it was—of head gardener at the Hall.

While affairs were in this state, and when Philip had been married some five or six years, the providence of God opened a way for the faithful preaching of the gospel in a neighbouring parish church. The parish was a small one, the church was small, too, and ancient; the living was only a poor vicarage, and irreligion abounded. A different state of things was brought about, however, when the gospel of Jesus Christ began to be proclaimed. The little church soon became better filled than it had been in former days, and at length it was crowded by attentive hearers, who listened as to some new thing. There was a great and marked improvement, too, in the moral aspect of that village. Sabbath sports were discontinued, the village public-house was comparatively quiet on Sunday evenings, and among the more hardened of the villagers there were one or two, who, having gone to church to mock and laugh at the solemnity of the services, had been known to retire from it to ask, with the Philippian jailor, in agony of soul, "What must I do to be saved?"

These events naturally made some noise beyond the limits of that small parish, and many persons from the country round went to the little church to hear for themselves the strange things which had been reported of the new vicar. Among these was the wife of Philip Martin, and the result was that she became alarmed for the safety of her immortal soul. At her repeated solicitation, her husband, on one occasion, accompanied her to the house of God, and it pleased God, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, to convince the hitherto careless and ignorant man, "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." For a long time he was in deep distress; he went again and again, and found no relief from the terrors of his soul: he obtained a Bible—for, until then, the blessed book had not found a place in his cottage, and he diligently read it. Light at length broke in upon his soul; he found that there was hope for the guilty, because "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth from all sin." He

had joy in believing, and the peace and love of God were shed abroad in his heart.

His wife, in some degree, passed through the same experiences, and found the same consolation, and thenceforth they rejoiced together in the same hope, and, as often as they could, went in company to the little church, though it was two miles from their cottage, where they had first heard the gospel preached.

It may be readily inferred that a change in the young gardener's conduct, as well as in that of his wife, soon became visible—a change corresponding to that which had passed over their souls. They brought forth fruit meet for repentance. Philip Martin was no longer to be found among the cricketers on the village-green on summer Sunday evenings. Instead of this, he was in his cottage, with his wife, reading the Bible, and teaching his eldest child to read it too. He entirely discontinued his visits to the Brown Bear—the village public-house, and his language was freed from the profanity which, at one time, had disgraced it. He made no pretensions to being religious above his neighbours, but these things could not be hidden, neither could it be denied that his home seemed a happier one than before, and that both himself and his wife were, in many respects, different from their former selves; nor is this surprising, if we bear in mind the statements of Scripture, that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17.

It is not surprising either that this marked change in Philip Martin brought upon him much scorn and contempt, and some persecution also, from his former companions, who began to think it strange that he ran not with them to the same excess of riot. He bore this patiently and meekly, however, for he knew that, but for the grace of God, he should still have been as they were, and this same grace taught him, and helped him to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously," 1 Pet. ii. 23.

But a sorer degree of persecution awaited Philip Martin than the scoffs and jeers of his fellow workmen. It soon came to the knowledge of Mr. Woodlands that his young gardener was strangely altered. He himself missed him from the village green when the Sunday evening sports were going on, and he very soon began to show his displeasure in various

ways, which it is not necessary to mention ; at length, however, it took the form of direct and active persecution.

Those who have felt the love of Jesus Christ shed abroad in their hearts are anxious that others should know the same blessedness. So it was with Philip Martin. Although he was for some time silent, from timidity and true humility, he felt at last that he could not but speak of the things which he had seen and heard. He saw around him much which grieved his soul, and that his neighbours were being destroyed for lack of knowledge ; he, therefore, invited one and another to accompany him to the house of God, and with some success ; and when two or three had yielded to his solicitations, and acknowledged that there was something in what the preacher said, and that if what he said was true they were in a bad position, Philip, after much hesitation, invited them to come quietly to his cottage on Sunday evenings to hear the Bible read. This had been going on through several months of the winter, and, very much beyond the young gardener's expectations, or even his intentions, these social meetings had at length crowded his cottage kitchen with attentive listeners to the word of God. Philip had also begun to venture to offer a few words of simple prayer at the commencement and close of the reading.

There was nothing in this, one would have supposed, to excite either alarm or indignation in Philip's master ; but indignation, at any rate, was excited when he heard of it, and he forthwith declared that he would have no such doings on his estate ; and soon afterwards meeting with his gardener, in the manner and at the time we have narrated, he peremptorily ordered him to discontinue his Sunday evening meetings forthwith, and not only so, but to leave off going to church out of his own parish : and, as a test of obedience, he required of him also to take his share, as formerly, in the Sunday evening games on the village green.

With a heavy heart Philip bent his steps towards his home. We have said it was a pleasant cottage. It was situated not far from his master's park, and pains had been taken to make it not only neat and comfortable within but picturesque without. It had a good vegetable garden behind, and a flower garden in front, which, always kept in first-rate order, was at this time gay with the blossoms of spring.

Philip's first impulse, as he drew near to his cottage, was to pass on, and shut out from his sight the scene which had so often given him pleasure, and of late thankfulness too ; so

that he had felt, notwithstanding the drawbacks of his situation, that the lines had fallen to him on pleasant places, yea, that he had a goodly heritage, Psalm xvi. 6. But his wife was just then coming out at the cottage door, and had seen his approach. He opened the garden gate, therefore, and as he walked up the path to meet her, tried to banish from his countenance the look of care which he well knew beclouded it. He was so far successful that Mrs. Martin did not at first perceive it.

"I am glad you are come home, Philip," said she, as her husband entered the cottage; "for poor Mary Green has been wanting to see you very much, and I told her you would look in this evening. Poor thing, she is very bad."

"I am afraid she is," said Philip; "I don't think she is likely to get over this illness as she did her last."

"She cannot, Philip; the doctor has quite given her up, and says she has not many weeks to live."

"Poor thing," said the gardener; "I'll go and see her if she wishes it, but I don't know what she can have to say to me."

"I can tell you, Philip," replied the wife, and her eyes glistened with happy tears as she spoke. "She wants to thank you for the good her poor soul has got by hearing the Bible read in our cottage on Sunday evenings; you know how regular she was in coming till she was taken ill, a month ago."

"If all the poor girl wants with me is to thank me—the young gardener began, but his wife interrupted him.

"No, that is not all, Philip; she wants to tell you a little of what she feels in her own soul, because she thinks it will encourage you to go on reading the Bible to everybody that will listen, and not to be weary in well doing."

"Well, I'll go and see the poor girl," said Philip, sorrowfully; "but, Hannah, you don't know that these Sunday evening readings are to be given up."

"Given up, Philip! No, I hope not. What do you mean?"

"The squire says he is determined to put them down, Hannah," said the gardener, more mournfully than angrily.

"Oh, Philip! do you really say so? Why, what harm can they do to any one?"

"He did not tell me that, exactly," he replied; "only that they were methodist doings, and he will not have any methodism in the parish while he is master at the Hall. And

there is something else, Hannah;"—and the gardener repeated the alternative which had that evening been placed before him.

"Philip," said the young wife, when her husband had done, "I did not think the squire could be so hard; but it seems to me as though this is permitted to try us, whether we are willing to forsake all and be Christ's disciples. It is a sore trial, Philip," said she, and she burst into tears.

"It is, Hannah; and if it were only to give up these Sunday evening readings, though they have been very precious to us, I do not know what I should say, while the squire is our master and we live in one of his cottages."

"Not know what to say, Philip? Why, surely the squire is not master of our souls, is he?" said Hannah, quickly; "and when we see that good is being done to the souls of others——"

"Yes, but any way, the squire has power to put a stop to the meetings by turning us out of the cottage, Hannah."

"Then it would be his doing and not ours, Philip; and I cannot help thinking of what the apostle said, you know—'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye' (Acts iv. 19). You remember our reading about that, Philip?"

"Yes, Hannah; but still I do not know what I should say if that was all he wanted of us; but then, about not going to hear God's gospel out of the parish, when we know that it is quite another gospel that we hear in it."

"It would not be right, I am sure, to obey the squire in that," said the wife. "And about your going to play on the green on Sundays, that would be downright denying the Saviour."

"It would, Hannah, and I could not do that; but it is a sore trial:" and the poor gardener sighed deeply.

"You will go and see Mary Green, won't you, Philip?" interposed his wife, and, receiving a reply in the affirmative, she hastened to get ready her husband's supper, though the poor downcast gardener had little appetite for it.

But when, an hour afterwards, he returned from the chamber of the dying young woman, every mark of doubt and uncertainty had vanished from his countenance. It had been proved to him, so far as proof could be given, that God had blessed the reading of his own word to a poor sinner who had lived many years in ignorance, as deep as his own had been, of the only way of salvation, through the Lord Jesus Christ. He had found, too, how little everything in the world appeared

when contrasted with the near prospect of eternity. Nothing could have been more opportune for Philip Martin's right decision, and nothing more inopportune for the successful operation of Mr. Woodland's threats, than this short interview with Mary Green. Truly, it was better—better for Philip Martin's soul—that he went to the house of mourning than if he had gone to the house of feasting.

“Let what will come of it, Hannah, I won't give up; I can't give up what I know to be right and take to what I know to be wrong,” said Philip Martin.* G. E. S.

BROKEN PROMISES.

LIFE is a vineyard, and in it there are many duties springing up, which God calls on us to cultivate and attend to. In childhood they rise, in youth they grow, and in manhood their forms become very manifold, but if, by God's grace, we perform the part of diligent spiritual husbandmen, the fruit will at length be rich and ripe. First of all, we must have and cherish a right state of heart towards God, seeking acceptance with him by faith in his blessed Son, and welcoming into our hearts the Spirit of love and grace for the renewal and sanctification of our fallen nature. A number of obligations further arise, connected with our condition in this world, and our relations to one another, every one of which is sacred, for nothing which is really our duty is a thing of man's planting, but has a Divine ground and authority. Never suppose that domestic affections, and daily industry, and uprightness of conduct in trade and business are not holy duties. Religion must not be confined to sabbath-keeping and Bible-reading, but must include all that our heavenly Master by conscience and Scripture binds upon us his creatures.

We are told, in the best of books, that a certain man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, “Son, go work to day in my vineyard.” This is the very thing that our Father in heaven is saying to every one of us; but with what effect? Some men grow up abandoned and lawless; their thoughts are lawless, their passions are lawless, their conduct is lawless. They have no reverence for what is right, no sense of the value of the soul, the authority of the Bible, the sacredness of conscience, the love of God. They trample down all that is precious and holy; and, in answer to God's voice, “Do this,” they say “I will not.” Infidels do so; sensual and

* To be continued.

profligate men do so ; hard, avaricious, thorough-going worldlings do so. The same cry goes up from many a gathering place for sceptical debate, from many a den of infamy and chamber of vice, and from many a counting-house and shop, many a market and mart.

But perhaps some one exclaims, "I never said to God I will not." There is nothing more common than for people to be ignorant of themselves, and to say many things, which, for want of thought, they themselves do not understand ; but God hears and understands all. How often does he catch the refusal, "I will not," when the soul does not suspect itself. The neglect of any duty, perceived and acknowledged to be a duty, is a virtual refusal to perform it. Many who shrink from the charge are open to it. Clearly understand this ; whenever you feel anything to be right, and decline to do it, you are refusing to work in your Father's vineyard. God requires you to give him your heart ; what does your worldliness mean but that you will not ? God bids you make his word your rule ; what does your indifference to its teaching mean but that you will not ? God calls on you to imitate Christ ; what does your total dissimilarity to that example of perfection mean but that you will not ? God enjoins you to repent ; what does your impenitence mean but that you will not ? Whatever any such refusal may proceed from, whether misplaced fear or misplaced love, whether from obstinacy or carelessness, be sure of this, it comes from a root of evil lying deep in the heart. And remember, moreover, under a beautiful outward show alienation from God may be there : What is within sight of men may be pleasant and fair even as "the garden of Eden ;" but what is underneath, yet within sight of Him who seeth not as man seeth, may be as the subterranean fires of the plain of Sodom.

How people deceive themselves by not putting their acts into words ! Deal impartially with your souls for once. You neglect duty ; you do not love God ; you do not forsake the world ; you do not follow Christ ; you do not repent : mystify not the meaning of all this ; honestly translate it ; wrap not up its fatal significance in a deceptive envelopment of circumlocution, but just write it down in plain monosyllables. It is saying to God's command, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard,"—"I will not."

Another form of practical disobedience consists in giving outward consent to the claims of God, but failing to fulfil them. This is exemplified by the second son in the parable referred

to. "The father came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not." Little as it may be supposed by many, nothing is more common than the making of such a promise by profession and then breaking it. Thus there is much of formal religious profession, the effect of human authority, advice, and counsel, and of submission to it, not on the ground that the thing enforced is right, not on the ground of allegiance to the Divine Lord and Parent who speaks through earthly teachers, but on the ground of deference or love to the human person giving the injunction. Thus some appear to make a religious profession simply because those around them do so. They live in a religious atmosphere; in even going to the Lord's table, for example, they only conform to a custom prevalent in the little quiet home world, where they have spent all their days, and than which they at present know no other. True spiritual imitation is a living principle full of strength; but mere conformity to precedent, the copying of certain acts, without having the spirit out of which the acts should grow, the mimicry of religion, is quite another thing. If we only promise to go into God's vineyard, because we see our relations and friends running in, but have no love for the work, no love for Him who calls us to it, we make a false promise. Compliance with custom is not obedience to God.

You may also make a profession of religion under the influence of excitement. Some personal trial may have taken place. Hope has been crushed. The dark cloud and the cold hand of disappointment have been felt. A friend has been taken away; a father, mother, or brother has been left in the grave. An earnest searching appeal relative to the world's vanity and to religious truth has been heard. A kind of dissatisfaction with the present may be thus produced, and from no deeper cause the excited spirit, hearing God's command to enter into his blessed service, may promise—"Lord, I will go." Excitement, it is true, often gives birth to principle; a sense of the world's vanity may prepare us to see the value of religion, and such feeling may, by God's grace, rise into holy purpose, and take definite shape, and become faith, obedience, and love; but the excitement which ends in itself, which is vague, undefined, impracticable, unintelligent, perhaps romantic, perhaps morbid, however it may express itself in words, though it may prompt the promise "I go," will be found in the end delusive and false; it carries with it nothing of strength and substance.

Many things may tend to produce a breach of promise so made.

If the promise springs simply from the influence of those we love, it may be broken through the influence of those we love. Those whom we venerate may give place to others of a different character, who shall be venerated in their turn. The present human sovereigns of the soul may be pushed aside by others. A new occupant may sit upon the throne of the soul, and the one may be the opposite of the old one; friends opposed to religion may come to have full authority over the pliant mind. Will they not undermine its religion? and through art, or perhaps even without design, inspire sympathy with themselves, and so by degrees lead the passive subject of their influence away from old grounds of thought, and fountains of feeling, and objects of reverence? If religious promises only rest on the love of human beings who happen to be in the ascendant for the time, when their place is taken by others of quite another stamp, what is to become of the promises under such circumstances?

In like manner, if the profession be the result of mere conformity to present circumstances and influence, may it not melt away when *they* change? How often have we seen young persons, when at home, hopeful and promising, ready to conform to religious usages, compliant with appeal and advice, who, on going from the shelter of home into the open world—on being thrown into temptation, and exposed to evil influences, have surrendered themselves to the force of this new tide of power, and been swept along, far, far away, like vessels from their former moorings.

So also it may be expected, that if the promise to serve God comes out of a gush of excitement, when the trouble is over, and the cloud is cleared away, and the mind has escaped from the religious monitor's spell, the promise itself will break like a bubble and melt into nothing.

So are promises about religion often made and broken. How, then, should they be made so as not to be broken? Thus:—They should be made in answer to the voice of God, with a careful pondering of the authority of that voice; with a deep sense of our sinful and ruined state, with true faith in Christ, and a simple dependence on him as the only Redeemer of the soul, and the only medium through which our service can be acceptably offered to our Father in heaven; in reliance also upon the Spirit, as the gracious power which the Lord will give us for the inspiring and the preserving of true obedience.

Have you made the promise which God claims, or refused to make it? Now it is a very terrible thing to say, "I will not." Whatever a person may afterwards do, there is nothing that can mitigate the evil of past disobedience. To try and diminish the dimensions of guilt contracted is perfectly vain, and can never help; but must always injure the sinner's case. A frank and unreserved avowal of our sinfulness is indispensable, and the first step towards hope. Now, the person who has declared "I will not," has no ground for despair if he will only imitate the second part of the first son's conduct. He said "I will not," but afterwards repented and went. "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" asks the Great Teacher. "They say unto him, The first; Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," Matt. xxi. 31. Wonderful words, indicating, *first*, that to refuse and repent is not so bad as to promise and break the promise; *secondly*, that people who have greatly sinned, even publicans and harlots, may get into the kingdom of heaven; and, *thirdly*, that Jesus Christ, so far from having a heart steeled against the profligate, has compassion on them, and opens the gates of his mercy for their admission through him.

Perhaps these remarks may fall into the hands of some one who has yielded to strong temptation, and is now engulfed in sensuality, or entangled in scepticism. We will not despair of you so long as any light of conscience gleams over the stormy sea of your dark, deep passions. We will not despair so long as anything like pure love lingers in your soul. Especially we do not despair, because the spiritual truths of the gospel are so beautiful, and so adapted to man's wants; because Christ is so patient and loving, and because the Spirit is so mighty and gracious. Nor should you despair, though tempted to do so; but at once gathering up into your broken heart faith and courage, flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Or it may be one is reading this who is haunted by the memory of promises and professions broken, saying, "There is no hope for me—I am excluded." You make a great mistake if you say that. It is indeed declared publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you, but that only teaches *their* precedence in the path of repentance, not *your* reprobation by the Lord of mercy. Your promises, indeed, have been false and hollow, but there is hope of you if you

feel that they have been false and hollow—that they never rested on the right ground—that they were broken because they had no root except self and creature reliance. There is hope if you turn now to Christ; if you cleave to him; if you live in the Spirit, and continue earnest in prayer: sure hope—abundant hope—everlasting hope—“hope that maketh not ashamed.”

J. S. .

THE BAZAAR; OR, SECRET MOTIVES.

“PLEASANT news, Sophy,” said Charlotte to her sister, as she entered the room in high spirits. “I scolded you for not leaving that work to walk with me; but now I say,

‘Work, work, work! while the cock is crowing aloof!
And work, work, work! till the stars shine over the roof!’

My news is, that Lady N. is about getting up a bazaar to increase the funds of the charity school, and we are expected to assist.”

“I am glad to hear it,” replied Sophy; “who told you?”

“Miss L. commissioned by Lady N. herself, who kindly said, that from all she has heard of us, she thinks we shall prove very efficient helps; and we won’t disappoint her.”

“She can have heard but very little of us,” observed Sophy.

“Well, she will soon be able to judge for herself. There is to be a meeting at two o’clock to-day at her house of ladies to arrange the matter, at which we are invited to attend. Now, Sophy, we shall get acquainted, and perhaps intimate, with Lady N.”

“Yes, it will be a nice opportunity,” said Sophy; but she stopped suddenly.

“Why do you look so grave all at once?” asked her sister.

“Just because these words occurred to me: ‘*Mind not high things.*’”

“Surely, Sophy, you do not think that it is because Lady N. has a title, and associates with the rich and great, that I wish to know her? No, it is because she is an active Christian, and in her circle we should meet some of the excellent of the earth.”

“Dear Charlotte, I thought not of you, but of myself. I too have wished to know Lady N., and believed that it was for the same reason that you do; but on examining my own secret motives, I found so much pride, so much desire for—shall I own it?—being distinguished above some of our young

friends, by her ladyship's notice, that I am trying to dismiss the wish altogether."

"Sophy," said Charlotte, rather crossly, "I do think you spend time searching out your secret motives for doing things, which would be better employed in doing them."

"Ah, sister, it is because I have found my heart to be so deceitful, and I should so like to be able, whatever I do, to do it heartily unto the Lord, and not unto men."

"It would be desirable," Charlotte answered; "but do get ready for Lady N.'s meeting. We can drive home through the town, and provide ourselves with materials for the pretty things we shall make for the bazaar. It is to be very soon, so not a moment can be lost."

During this conversation their young brother had been lying on a sofa, apparently asleep. He was a midshipman; and his foot having been much hurt by an accident which occurred on board the ship he belonged to, he had been allowed to spend some time at home for the purpose of recruiting his health. "Sisters," said he, starting up, "I want you to do something for me. You know that the poor sailor who was killed when I got this ugly hurt, asked me with his dying breath to take a message to his wife and children, who live in this neighbourhood, whenever I came home. Jack desired me to tell them he was going to be happy with his Saviour; to give them his old Bible and a few books which the captain's sister had given him one day that she came on board; and to say, he hoped they would learn the way to follow him. I was not well enough to go so far as their cottage till yesterday. I found them in a sad way. The wife has been ill ever since she heard of poor Jack's death, and as she supported her children by being a laundress, this has made them in great distress. My father has given me a few shillings which I want you both to take to her."

"Not now, Frederick, we are going to a meeting of ladies at Lady N.'s," said Charlotte. "Cannot you send the money by a messenger?"

"I could, or I might go myself, but," he continued with hesitation, "this poor woman, on getting the Bible, said to me, as well as tears would let her speak, that she was wishing and longing for some one to talk to her about religion, and read for her, since her illness—to talk of the religion which had made her poor man so happy and so good for the last four years, and which he had often asked her to attend too. Oh! girls, I wished I could better remember all that our mother

taught us when we were little, for I pitied her ; but I promised to send you to her, and won't you go ? ”

Charlotte answered, “ Certainly, but not now. Our first duty is to promote the interests of the school, where so many will be taught what is right. We must not neglect that for one person. Come, Sophy, do get ready.”

“ Well,” said Frederick, “ I remember what I was taught so far as to know that true religion is to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction. Is there not such a verse Charlotte ? ”

“ Yes, and there is also such a verse as ‘ These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.’ Each in its time, Fred.” And the sisters went to prepare for the drive.

The thought of the meeting was very pleasant to Sophy, who was of a lively, social temper ; and as she felt real interest in the welfare of the school, she was also very glad to hear of the bazaar, and concluded at once that, as Charlotte said, their first duty was to attend to that matter. But this young girl's mind was deeply imbued with a sense of what a disciple of Jesus ought to be ; and, as she had just told her sister, she had so often found her heart deceitful that she greatly distrusted its dictates, and made a practice of following the Psalmist's advice (Ps. iv. 4.), communing with it to find out those secret motives which, almost unknown to ourselves, so much influence our opinions and actions. She did so on the present occasion, and the result was that in a short time after, she entered her sister's apartments in her walking dress. “ Charlotte,” she began, “ I have been considering what Frederick said, and as I do think that my first duty to day is to visit the widow and the fatherless, I must ask you to apologize for my absence at the meeting, engaging for me that I will do all I can for the bazaar.”

“ Nonsense, Sophy. Just consider ; Lady N.—all the ladies—will think it so strange that you should be lukewarm about such a matter.”

“ I am sorry, indeed,” said Sophy, looking as if she really felt it, “ but going to the meeting would be so much pleasanter than at first I thought it would be right. Now I feel that one of us ought to visit, without delay, this sick woman who is in want, and who, from Fred's account, is I trust, ‘ hungry for the food of life ;’ and I will do so, as you can better assist in making arrangements for the bazaar, and will bring me an account of every thing.”

Without waiting to hear her sister's further expostulations,

Sophy set out on her walk ; taking with her a little basket filled with some things fit for a sick person, and the money which her father had given Frederick. "I hope and believe I am doing right," she thought ; and it was a pleasant reflection, but, as Charlotte said, "the other must not be left undone." The widow's cottage was at some distance from Sophy's residence, so that if she went there often, much of the time would be occupied which otherwise she would have devoted to working for the bazaar ; and now to make up in some degree for this deficiency, she resolved on rising every morning an hour earlier than usual.

To describe the scene of sorrow which the bereaved family of the sailor presented to Sophy would exceed our limits. Suffice it to say, that after administering, as well as she could, to their temporal and spiritual destitution, she became deeply interested in their case ; and on laying down the Bible which she had been reading aloud, and which, as she feared, the sick woman had listened to attentively, chiefly because it had been her poor Jack's book, Sophy promised, at her entreaty, to visit her again the following day.

On returning home she found Frederick in the workshop, where, being of a mechanical turn, he often amused himself, and gave him an account of her visit. "That's a good girl, Sophy," said he, "and I will make you something pretty for your stall in the bazaar."

Charlotte came back in high spirits ; she had taken a prominent part at the meeting ; Lady N. was most agreeable ; and had arranged that each young lady should have a stall to herself at the bazaar. Whoever had most money after the sale was to be presented with a fine plant of camellia in full blossom. "Oh ! how I should like to get it," cried Sophy, who loved flowers dearly.

Charlotte had brought home materials for screens, pin-cushions, and other matters, upon which both sisters immediately commenced operations ; but Sophy, as she had expected, found her time and attention so much occupied by the sailor's family, that her preparations proceeded slowly. Her sister, and other young friends, worked incessantly ; stimulated not only by a wish to help the school, but to obtain Lady N.'s approbation, and the beautiful camellia. Sophy felt depressed that she could do so little, and at the thought that her stall would probably be the worst supplied of any at the bazaar ; still she had real comfort in perceiving that her labour of love at the cottage was not in vain. Gospel truth had shed its

light and consolation on the widow's mind; her health was improving, and Sophy had obtained employment for two of her children, which was a great assistance to her.

The day appointed for the bazaar arrived, and Frederick presented his sister with the toy which he had promised to make. It was a perfect little model of the frigate he belonged to, very nicely executed. Still even with this addition to her store, when the stalls were furnished, Sophy's was not equal in display to any of the others, and as she was known to be very ingenious, every one seemed surprised and disappointed. Though such articles as she had were purchased, except the ship, there was not a hope of her obtaining the flower, and she anticipated the shame she should feel next day when accounts were settled, in presenting so small a sum. At last an elderly gentleman drew near, and taking up the little frigate, examined it with the air of one who was able to appreciate its merits. "Admirably done!" he exclaimed; "I declare it is the E—herself. Pray, young lady, who made this?"

"My brother, sir. He belongs to the E—, and is now at home, through an accident on board, by which he was hurt, and a poor sailor, whose family lives near us, was killed."

"Ha! I heard of that—and his family lives about here, you say?"

"Yes, sir," and she mentioned where.

"Well, I will buy your frigate," said the gentleman; "please keep it for me till I come back."

This somewhat raised Sophy's spirits, and she watched for her new friend's return, but in vain; the bazaar was over, and he had not come. At the tea-table that evening, Charlotte talked with much glee over the pleasure she had enjoyed at the bazaar, and all she expected the next day when the young ladies were to give the profits of their sales to Lady N.; and many were her conjectures as to the fortunate one who should obtain the camellia, of which she had hope for herself. On this subject Sophy could not help feeling a little mortified, but the thought that, as she humbly trusted, she had in this matter done what she did as unto the Lord, and not unto men, produced the peace of mind which a conviction that our motives are right, however they may have been misunderstood, always gives. The sound of the hall-door bell was now heard, and being unusual at so late an hour, occasioned surprise. A gentleman entered, and Frederick exclaimed, "The captain,—come to see me,—how kind!" while Sophy instantly recognised her acquaintance of the morning.

"Yes, Fred," he replied, "I am passing a few days with my sister, Lady N., and resolved to enquire about you. But I have business also with this young lady," addressing Sophy. "Excuse me for not returning to the bazaar to-day, but I was unavoidably prevented. I went afterwards to visit poor Jack's family; I had a regard for Jack, a better fellow never walked the deck. His widow spoke a good deal of you, Miss Sophy, and all you have been doing for her of late, which, when I repeated it to Lady N., enabled her to understand what prevented you from working so hard in the cause of her bazaar as you might otherwise have done. My sister was very glad to hear about Jack's Bible; and she was the lady who gave it to him; but she will talk to you to-morrow about it when you come to settle accounts. Now give me my purchase."

She presented him with the little ship, and he laid a five-pound note on the table before her. "Not a word," he cried, interrupting her thanks, "surely the good ship E—is worth that. You will take that also," laying down another, "and supply the wants of Jack's family as far as it will go. Lady N. has promised me to consult with you about providing for them in future."

When the sisters were next alone together, Charlotte flung her arms round Sophy's neck: "Dear Sophy," she said, "how glad I am that the secret motives which led you to seem lukewarm in a good cause are made known! How I wish that all mine for being zealous would bear examining as well! And now you are sure of the camellia."

E. F. G.

CHRISTIAN SERVANTS.

THE question has been often asked with deep anxiety by the Christian servant whose employers have been thoughtless and unconverted, "What can I do to lead them to a sense of their guilt and danger, and to induce them to seek salvation through Jesus Christ?"

In any case great wisdom is needed in seeking the spiritual welfare of others; but that wisdom is especially necessary when those whose benefit is sought occupy a higher position in life. Anything like such direct expostulation and intreaty as might be deemed becoming when addressed to an equal or an inferior, would be almost sure to be resented as an impertinence when addressed by a servant to a master or mistress, and would very likely produce a stronger feeling of dislike to the religion which was thus obtruded.

“Then am I,” such a servant may ask, “to do nothing? Must I suffer those whose souls I know to be so precious to press on to destruction, without a single effort to call their attention to that gospel by which alone they can be saved?”

“No,” it is replied. “By the maintenance of a uniform consistency, by the application of Christian principle to every duty of your station, by faithfulness, by diligence, by a becoming and respectful demeanour, and by the cultivation of all that is lovely in Christian character, you may do much to recommend and adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour. Respect may be thus produced for the gospel itself; a spirit of inquiry may be excited; and by and by those for whom you are anxious may be brought under the power of the truth.”

Two interesting instances known to the writer may be cited in illustration of what may be done indirectly by converted servants for the salvation of their superiors.

The first case is that of a lady who, at the commencement of her life, was extremely fond of almost every kind of gaiety. There was not one of all the circle in which she moved who entered more thoroughly into the dissipating amusements of fashionable life. The ball-room and the theatre were her frequent resort, and her manners and her position in life were such that her society was eagerly courted by those of kindred tastes with herself. It so happened, however, in the providence of God, that two of her children were smitten by a fatal disease. She watched over them with all a mother's loving tenderness, and everything that medical skill could do was done, but all in vain. In the course of a few days they were both taken away. She was inconsolable. She had no idea of the true source of consolation, and as soon as it was decorous to do so, she plunged again into the dissipations of the world. She failed, as so many have done, in finding there the relief she sought. All she could secure from the most inspiring amusements was a temporary forgetfulness, and when she returned to her home, it was only to feel more keenly the loss she had sustained. One evening, the thought of her bereavement still uppermost, she entered her desolated nursery, and found her maid, a pious girl, with whose conduct she had been much satisfied, reading her Bible. Without obtruding her occupation, the girl made no secret of it, and there before her still lay the open volume. Her mistress's eye fell upon it, and, with a heart yearning for something which might afford relief from her sorrow, she asked the servant if she found comfort there. The reply was simply and modestly in the

affirmative. A brief conversation ensued, and the result was that the lady read the Bible for herself. The hand of God's chastisements had prepared her to receive its message of mercy, and she soon found in it the solace which she could not find in all the pleasures of the world. She saw her need of salvation, recognised it as God's purpose in the sorrows by which she had been visited to lead her to the cross, and believed with all her heart in the Lord Jesus Christ. She became from that time an earnest follower of the Redeemer, devoting no small portion of her time, her energies, and her property to the service of God. She subsequently passed through many sorrows and bereavements, but she ever found, whilst bowing with all submissiveness to the dispensations of a wise and righteous Providence, that the consolations of the gospel were amply sufficient to sustain her beneath the heaviest trials. And yet the instrument of that mighty change—a change so replete with blessing to the lady herself and to many besides—was the Christian example of her pious servant.

The other case was that of a personal friend of the writer; a young man, scarcely at the time more than eighteen years of age, who was engaged as a reporter in a newspaper office. He was a youth of gentle and unassuming manners, and of the most retiring modesty, but at the same time of much decision of religious character. Young as he was, he was regarded with the greatest respect and love by all who knew him. So unvarying was his consistency, and so becoming his whole demeanour, that even those who had no love for the gospel, and who were ready enough to sneer at all religious profession, seemed as though in his presence their scoffs must be silenced, and as though they felt that his religion was a reality.

It was his custom, in accordance with a recommendation he found in an excellent work, entitled "Advice to a Young Christian," published by the Religious Tract Society, to spend half-an-hour, morning and evening, in devotional exercises. Whatever demands there were upon his time, that half-hour was always regarded as sacred, and he often deprived himself of rest that he might enjoy his wonted season of communion with heaven. On one occasion, after he had attended an important public meeting, he was about to sit up all night, for the purpose of preparing his report, accompanied by one of the sons of his employer, a young gentleman of amiable character, but, as yet, a stranger to the renewing grace of the gospel. The youthful Christian saw himself in a dilemma. The hour of retirement had come, and he felt that it could be

scarcely right to allow it to pass without snatching at least a brief space for the wonted exercise. After some mental struggle he resolved to ask permission to withdraw for a short time, but without assigning any reason for the request. The reason, however, was suspected, and by some means ascertained. The influence on his superior's mind was such that it led him to serious thought, and had no slight weight in inducing his own religious decision. It may be observed, however, that the act itself would not have exerted the influence it did, had it not been the act of one whose whole conduct and spirit were marked by a beautiful and unvarying consistency. The youth who displayed this steady adherence to what he deemed his duty died at the age of nineteen. It seemed an untimely removal, for he was a young man of much promise; but if he only lived to exhibit an example so instructive and influential he did not live in vain.

There is no position in life, in which good service may not be done for God; and sometimes that service may be rendered, and great good accomplished, where the direct inculcation of religious truth might be entirely out of place, and where all that remains is the silent preaching of a life which is actuated by the great principle of loving obedience to Christ. s. g.

THE ALMSHOUSE; OR, THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

THERE are few way-side scenes more interesting than a cluster of almshouses. They awaken within us feelings of sympathy and benevolence; of gratitude for our own mercies, and of pleasure, that the need of others is kindly provided for; that the aged and toil-worn there find an asylum, and a place of rest, in which peacefully to end their days.

In a neat room of such a building, near London, lived a dear old friend, with whom it was both pleasant and profitable to pass an hour. In the days of boyhood, while merrily engaged at play, we often saw an old man walking slowly along the road, or standing leaning upon his staff to watch our gambols. He was a happy-looking old man, had always a sunny smile and a cheerful word for boys at play, and such a man wins the young heart. After a time he became quite familiar with us, and we daily expected old William's visit.

"Boys," said he, one sunny day, "I have something at home that may amuse and instruct you, if you like to pay

me a visit." We readily promised to do so, and to the alms-house we went. From a cupboard, by the fire-side, the old man produced a number of rare stones and fossils, all neatly labelled. He told us, he had gathered them in Devonshire and Cornwall, and gave us an amusing description of each. He then replaced them, and produced a large tray, on which were pinned various specimens of beetles and insects, collected by him in his rambles many years before. He pointed out their beauty and delicate texture, and added some simple, yet loving words, about the mighty power and wisdom of God, and the love that is manifest in all his works.

Such was our first visit to Old William. Time passed on; it made the boy stronger, and the old man weaker. The school and the playground were left, for the active duties of life; but upon my mind the old man had made an impression which did not wear off. Several miles separated our abodes, yet I often contrived to spend a quiet hour with him. I well remember him, sitting in his high-back'd wooden arm-chair; his thin pale face, upon which a smile ever rested; his bald forehead; his few silvery locks neatly curling round the side of his head; his spectacles on; his elbow on the polished round table, and his head resting on his hand, while before him lay the large old Bible, with its cover of green baize, and its numerous slips of paper, marking various passages, which had struck his attention. Dear old man! He has passed away, and the asylum that shielded his last days has yielded him up to a better and more secure one; he stands, now, in the home above prepared for those who love God. There may I, and every reader, join him and go no more out for ever.

Many were the invitations Old William gave me to trust, early in life, the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour and my Guide. Many were the words of warning and of encouragement I received from him, and many the prayers that went up to the mercy seat on my behalf. Blessed be God, I trust they were not in vain.

As his life advanced, so his faith in Christ, and delight in the gospel increased. The light imparted to him, shone "more and more unto the perfect day." I don't know of any thing more conducive to the growth in grace of the young Christian than intercourse with an old disciple "just on the verge of heaven." At any rate, I ever found it a great help to be with Old William.

"What comfort there is in the religion of Jesus Christ to

an old man like me !" he said to me, one day ; " what should I do now without ~~the~~? I am standing at the grave's mouth, my boy, and very soon the clods of the valley will cover me. Had I the wealth of worlds, I must leave it all ; but my wealth is of a better sort ; it is laid up in heaven ; that is my bank, and my heavenly Father is my banker. He grants me as much as I need while I remain here, and when I reach that better land, I shall have an inexhaustible supply ; and the best of all is, that the whole, both here and there, is his free gift to me, through Jesus Christ his Son. I never deserved it. I could never have merited it. But he gives it freely without money and without price."

"How long," I asked, "is it since you first began to seek the Lord?"

"Ah!" he replied, "the Lord sought me, else I should never have turned to him. Fourscore and four years have passed over my head, yet more than half that time I lived without God in the world. In my childhood I had not the advantages you have had ; no Sunday-school blessed our village, and my parents thought very little about their own souls, and still less about mine. I grew up gay and thoughtless, active and happy ; I worked hard all day, and as I could sing a good song and crack a joke, I found plenty of companions as giddy as myself, with whom I spent the evening. Alas ! I wonder where they all are now. I saved a little money, however, married, went into business, and prospered.

"In a few years I had several men under me, and a family of three dear children ; these were, as I then considered them, my palmy days, but I spent them without a thought of the Giver of all my mercies ; I lived a heathen life in a Christian land. But I was not always to continue prosperous. A dark cloud of trouble gathered over me. My children caught the smallpox ; and the youngest two died ; my eldest son recovered slowly. This sad event was a great shock to me and my dear wife. A serious illness laid me aside for two months. The person to whom I confided my business was faithless, and decamped after robbing me to a considerable amount. I was thus suddenly reduced almost to poverty. In these trials I first felt the need of true consolation and support. I looked to my friends, but many who had clung round me in my prosperity, shook me off in my adversity ; and of those who did attempt to comfort me, their words fell cold and powerless on my heart. I had no sincere friend, and I almost learned to curse the name of friendship.

"Having arranged my affairs with my creditors, to the best of my ability, I obtained a situation which enabled me to maintain my family in humble respectability. I was yet a stranger to the gospel. True, I sometimes opened the Bible, and occasionally I wandered into a neighbouring place of worship, but I knew nothing of my condition as a guilty sinner. I reasoned with myself that in these trials, I had been hardly and unfairly dealt with. I neglected to train up my child in the fear of the Lord; I never prayed for him; alas! I knew not how to pray. He grew up, mixed with bad company, rebelled against his parents, and requited their foolish fondness and indulgence with harsh and bitter words. This trial was more painful than the former ones had been. In him our best love and our fondest hopes were centred; and his ungrateful conduct cut deep into our hearts. He went on in sin, until, in a fatal moment, he enlisted for a soldier, and in a short time was ordered to India. Three times we saw him ere he sailed, and then we saw him no more. I was a crushed man; I lost all heart for business or pleasure, I murmured at Providence, and the language of my heart was, "Curse God and die." Oh, had God granted my impious wish, how fearful would my portion have been!

"In such a mood, I wandered one sabbath morning into the house of God; it was the first time I had entered since my son's enlistment. I did not know then why I went—I know now; it was the Holy Spirit that led me there. The minister was reading the third chapter of John. I listened, and the words struck my heart. Still more impressed was I, when the good man before his sermon prayed that 'if any heart-broken, unpardoned sinner were there, who had never known what it was to be born of the Spirit, he might be taught it then;' for my conscience whispered, Thou art such a one. With a stricken heart I listened to the sermon: it was from the words of Jesus, in John iii. 3: 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;' and, for the first time in my life, I felt I was without God, and without hope in the world. I went home more wretched than ever; my trials were forgotten in my new anxiety; my wife could not understand it, she urged me to forget what I had heard. 'We have sorrow enough,' she said kindly, 'do not increase it.' In the evening I went again, and heard the word of truth, and from that time I was a changed man. On my return home, a young man tapped me on the shoulder, saying,

‘Excuse me, sir, I have seen you twice to day at worship; I have heard of your trial, and heartily sympathize with you; have you enjoyed the services to day?’ His earnest and kind manner won me directly; I told him all I felt, and he poured such comfort into my soul as I never felt before.

“Some weeks passed before I felt satisfied about my state. My guilty life rose up against me; my sins stared me in the face, and I doubted if there was mercy for me; but God blessed my instructor’s advice and the prayerful reading of his word; and in his own good time he filled me with joy and peace in believing. My beloved wife obtained the like precious blessing, and we journeyed on together, till about fifteen years ago, when the Lord called her to himself. I continued in my situation, until I became too old to fulfil its duties; my kind employers then obtained this neat little abode for me, and settled upon me a small weekly sum sufficient for my few wants; thus has the Lord mercifully provided for my declining days; oh! how much do I owe him for all his goodness towards me!”

“And have you never heard from your son?” I asked.

“Yes, I heard once that he was well and had been advanced in his regiment. The next information I received was from a comrade of his, some three years after; it stated that my son had taken fever, and died in two days. I never could learn whether he died as he had lived, or whether he became a penitent believer in Jesus Christ. I can only hope that the Lord granted that he had found mercy.

“And now, my dear child,” the old man continued, gently laying his hands on my shoulder, while the large tears chased each other down his cheeks, “you have heard the short history of a long life; learn from it the importance of an early decision for God; how much better it is to give the heart to God when it is young and tender, than to defer it to an uncertain after, which, in many cases (though mercifully not in mine) never comes. Had I begun to follow God at fifteen instead of fifty, how many years of sadness might have been spared me; how many souls I might have been the instrument of saving; how different a life might my poor boy’s have been; and how many sad hours of bitter reflection might have been hours of grateful recollection! No time like the morning of life to serve God. No offering more acceptable to him than the flower of our existence in its early blossom. I know what it is to live without God; and I know also what it is to live with God, as a reconciled Father and

Friend. Choose him now, my child, and avoid the follies of my strongest and heartiest days. I do, thanks to the good Lord, look forward to a place in the better world, near my Redeemer's throne; I do expect that his blood has purchased a crown of gold for my unworthy head; but I often sigh when I think that a nearer station, and a brighter crown, might have been mine, had I done all I might have done for my God in my life's early days."

The shades of the autumn evening were gathering, and I said farewell to my dear old friend, having learned a lesson I hope never to forget. I often saw him again; he was ripening for glory: one felt in his presence to be treading on holy ground. Two years after relating the above, he gently breathed out his soul into the hands of Jesus, and, like a tired child on its mother's bosom, he sweetly fell asleep. T. B.

THE OLD CLOAK; or, HOW TO LIKE AN OLD CLOAK
BETTER THAN A NEW ONE.

I HAVE had a cloak for several years; the colour is rather faded, the substance somewhat worn, and the cut is quite out of fashion.

"Why do you not get a new cloak?" said a neighbour to me, one day. Whether mine was too short, or too long, I do not recollect; I only know it was almost the only one of the kind. My income was moderate; but I made up my mind to put by seventy-five francs for this important object.

The weather was not severe enough to call for the immediate purchase of a new cloak, and I wished to wait for the newest fashion and the best materials. But, while I was thus in suspense, I was told of an aged female, very pious, but very poor, and deprived of all her property by her son's bad conduct; shivering in her ill-closed garret, she tried in vain to make her little fire burn; she got scarcely anything but clouds of smoke. A voice whispered to me, how much better would a good stove warm this wretched apartment, and how much happier would the old woman be!

I turned the matter over in my mind; I could not buy both articles, a good stove and a new cloak. I weighed their comparative merits, and the balance turned in favour of the stove. My old cloak was retained in my service as if it had been a new one.

The winter came, and brought with it more than the aver-

age number of frosts. I often visited poor old Jenny: every time I found her comfortably seated by the side of her stove. One day, the door being ajar, I heard her ask God to bless the person who had done her so much good: it brought tears into my eyes—such tears as accompany the best joys of our hearts. A little while after, I found a neighbour and her sick child seated near my old friend. She was willing to share her comfortable warmth with those who were more destitute than herself. As I went down the staircase, I wrapped myself in my cloak, and my old servant seemed to possess a beauty and a warmth which the latest and most elegant fashion could never have given to a new cloak. *Glaneur Savoyard.*

PRAYER.

Go when the morning shineth;
 Go when the noon is bright,
 Go when the eve declineth;
 Go in the hush of night;
 Go with pure mind and feeling;
 Fling earthly thoughts away;
 And in thy chamber kneeling,
 Do thou in secret pray.

Remember all who love thee;
 All who are loved by thee.
 Pray too for those who hate thee,
 If any such there be.
 Then for thyself in meekness,
 A blessing humbly claim;
 And link with each petition
 Thy great Redeemer's name.

Or if 'tis e'er denied thee
 In solitude to pray,
 Should holy thoughts come o'er thee
 When friends are round thy way,
 E'en then the silent breathing,
 The spirit raised above,
 Will reach His throne of glory,
 Who is mercy, truth, and love.

Oh, not a joy nor blessing
 With this can we compare,
 The power that He has given us
 To pour our souls in prayer!
 Whene'er thou pin'st in sadness,
 Before his footstool fall;
 Remember in thy gladness,
 His love who gave thee all.



"PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN."

PART II.

PHILIP MARTIN knew that his master's threats were not vain words, spoken only to frighten him; and on the following Saturday evening he had to convey to Hannah the expected but mournful intelligence that he was discharged, and had notice to quit the cottage immediately. It was no light trial of his faith and patience that had happened to him; and he looked round with a sorrowful countenance as he told the news. The home which was endeared to them both by many pleasant recollections, and the garden which he had, in his leisure hours, taken such pains to cultivate, would be no longer his. And, what was worse, he could not tell where to

look for another home. Worse even than this, Philip too well knew that the fact of his having left the service of squire Woodlands in disgrace, would shut him out from employment elsewhere, in his own or in the neighbouring parishes. Who would care to give him work after that?

He would not have to suffer alone; and Philip felt this to be the heaviest part of his trial. He had not only a wife to care for, but three children, who had hitherto known but few, if any, of the privations of poverty: and the young gardener could have wept when he looked upon them.

Nor would such tears have been either unmanly or unchristian, but Philip restrained himself; and his wife, who had silently watched his countenance, and guessed what was passing in his mind, reached the Bible from its shelf, and without speaking a word, put it into her husband's hands.

Philip could readily understand Hannah's meaning. He rose and closed his cottage door; then returning to his seat, he took his eldest child on his knee, (who wondered, perhaps, what could make his parent so sad,) and opened the Bible.

Martin was not a very expert Bible scholar. He had not known, from his youth, the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus; but he knew where to look for comfort and encouragement, and he was able to cast all his care upon Him who cares for his people, and who has promised that he will never leave nor forsake them.* No wonder, then, that the countenances both of Philip and his wife presently brightened, and were no longer downcast.

There are those who have ventured to say that the religion of the Bible is not intended or calculated to promote happiness in the present life, whatever may be its rewards hereafter. We are pretty sure that Philip Martin would not have assented to this strange doctrine, but rather that he would have declared his firm belief, even at this time of sorrow, that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;"† and that he could have fully agreed in the following sentiments also:—

"Boast not, ye sons of earth,
Nor look with scornful eyes;
Above your highest mirth,
Our saddest hours we prize.
For though our cup seems filled with gall,
There's something secret sweetens all."

* 1 Peter v. 7; Heb. xiii. 5.

† 1 Tim. iv. 8.

And we may venture further to assert that, on that very evening, when Philip and Hannah rose from their knees, after pouring out their souls before God in prayer, squire Woodlands at the Hall, with all his riches, was not so truly happy as they were with all their worldly troubles.

The promises of God to those who trust in him are very many and precious; but he nowhere in the Bible has bound himself down to any precise way in which favour—his own favour—is to be shown to his people. Sometimes, in very faithfulness, he sees fit to visit them with losses and troubles, and then it is good for them to be thus afflicted. At other times, he suffers them to be oppressed by the ungodly, without appearing to regard it; but be sure of this, ye who are persecuted, he knows your sorrows and hears your groaning, and takes account of your tears.* It is not even necessary for the proof of his faithfulness and love that he should, in every case, keep his people from the sufferings of a life of disappointment and poverty in this world. It may be best for them to be poor and despised, and to have only this promise of worldly good fulfilled in their experience, “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.”† But be certain of this, ye children of God, that you are not forgotten, and that “light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.”‡

Philip Martin's forebodings were realized. He had great difficulty in providing himself with another home; but after a long search he found a small cottage in another parish, and thither he removed his family and his worldly goods. He had still greater difficulty in obtaining work. He tried first to get employment at his regular occupation of gardening, but there were not many persons within a circuit of several miles who employed gardeners, and those who did looked coldly on the applicant, and even spoke roughly to him, when they heard that he had been discharged by squire Woodlands. When Philip went further off from the parish, and where Mr. Woodland's name did not carry with it so much weight, the young gardener found that there was even less prospect of success. If gardeners were wanted, employers did not choose to engage one who came from a distance. They had workmen enough in their own parishes they said.

And so two or three weeks were spent in a vain search for work. Then he tried to find employment as a farm labourer.

* Exod. ii. 24; iii. 7. Ps. lvi. 8.

† Is. xxxiii. 16.

‡ Ps. xcvi. 11.

But even this seemed hopeless, for the farmers of the parish had already labourers enough; and, besides, they would not risk giving offence to their landlord by taking on a workman whom he had cast off in displeasure. And if this slur had not been so strongly fastened on Philip Martin, there was another stumbling-block; the farmers did not want religion on their farms, any more than the squire wanted it in his gardens.

It was well for Philip then that his religion had taught both him and Hannah prudence in the things of this life. He had a small stock of money, saved from his former wages, and with this he was enabled to provide for his family during several weeks of enforced and anxious leisure. At length, however, this was nearly exhausted, and still his worldly prospects were dark and distressing.

Did he not then repent his firmness, or what others called his obstinacy? No, he did not. He was so far from repenting it, that when a message reached him from Mr. Woodlands that if he chose to be obedient to his requirements, and give up his own methodist ways and notions, he might have his situation again, for asking for it, he refused to yield. "I would do anything for the squire, and submit to anything he might wish," he said, "if I could do it without offence to my Master in heaven; but to shut up my Bible, and to be a sabbath-breaker again, I cannot do that."

The young gardener was the more encouraged in this determination by his occasional visits to the bedside of Mary Green, who was slowly but surely sinking into the grave; for in those visits, he saw reason to bless God that his imperfect and weak endeavours to do good and to communicate had not been in vain. Before she had listened to the reading of the word of God, the poor invalid had been very ignorant and careless, and lived without God in the world and without hope. But the Bible had shown her her need of a Saviour, and the way of approach to him who came into the world to seek and to save those who are lost. Sickness had deepened her convictions, and now that death was so near, she could find encouragement in the declarations and promises of Him who says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

"And oh, Mr. Martin," said she, with her gasping breath, "if it had not been for you, I should have gone on caring and thinking nothing about the Saviour and the Bible; and don't be discouraged and driven off from trying to do good to others; for there *are* others, you know, who need the Saviour's help, just as I needed it, and need it now."

Thus comforted and encouraged, no wonder that Philip Martin and his wife bore up patiently and hopefully; and that so far from being overcome by the persecution which had brought them so low in their outward circumstances, they felt as though the words of the apostle Paul were, with peculiar force, addressed to them; "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."* And for the same reason, though others under the same circumstances might have pleaded depression of mind as an excuse for slackening their efforts for the good of others, did Philip Martin the more earnestly persevere in the same course which had brought on him the displeasure of his late master.

* * * * *

Four years had passed away, and squire Woodlands had, it may be, almost forgotten his poor gardener, Martin: or, if he remembered him, it was with anger at the thought that any tenant and workman of his should have disregarded his authority, and braved the consequences of disobedience. Philip's situation had long been filled up at the Hall; and if the new second gardener was sometimes idle, and sometimes muddled with drink, and too much given, also, to eye-service, at any rate he was not a "methodist," and, in Mr. Woodlands' estimation, almost anything was better than that.

It was a fine summer's day, and there had been, for some days previously, extra bustle in the squire's gardens; for the first annual exhibition of a recently formed Horticultural Society was to be held, near a small town, at some miles distance from the Hall. Mr. Woodlands had been active in the formation and establishment of the society. He was one of its patrons, and had been elected its president; and as he was anxious to do credit to his own gardens, his gardeners had been busy in packing up objects for the approaching show.

The exhibition was held in a large marquee, pitched in a meadow near the town, and tables were richly covered with fruits and flowers, set out with taste and skill. It was a sight worth going many miles to see. There was one table for the products of gentlemen's gardens, another for those of professional gardeners, and a third for those of cottage gardens. Prizes were to be given to the latter class for the best specimens of different sorts of fruits and flowers, one object of the society being the praiseworthy one of exciting and encour-

raging among the poor a taste for garden cultivation. A large tent was also prepared, in which the members of the society were to dine after the business of the day was over, and in which also the prizes were to be given.

The day, as we have said, was fine, and many were gathered together to the exhibition from the whole country round. Squire Woodlands arrived early in his carriage, and took a large share in the proceedings of the day; and at length the time came for the distribution of the prizes.

Many ladies and gentlemen were in the tent, when one after another, the cottagers to whose fruits and flowers the prizes had been awarded, were called in, and bashfully brought forward to receive, from the hands of the president, the several small sums of money, and the praises which they had earned for industry and successful cultivation. Among these recipients was a poor man, pale as though from recent sickness, and in garments, though neat and clean, yet patched and threadbare.

The man advanced quietly to the table; and his almost timid glance was met by the searching, inquisitive looks of the president of the society.

"Eh, Martin, is this you?" exclaimed Mr. Woodlands, with a sudden start of surprise, which he was not able to conceal; "so that selection of pansies is yours, is it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well; they have gained a prize, then," continued the squire, with what appeared to be a tone of discomposure, and a look of chagrin. "There it is;" and he pushed the money towards the poor man. "Stop, though," he added; "do you mean to say that you cultivated those flowers yourself?"

A slight blush, it might be of momentary indignation, coloured the pale countenance of Philip Martin, as he replied in the affirmative; but it soon passed away.

"I worked for you a good many years," he added, in a low and tremulous voice: "a good many years, sir, and if you think I should be dishonest—"

"Oh, I don't trouble myself to think about the matter, Martin," replied the squire, in a louder tone, "you were honest enough then; but you methodist fellows, there is no telling where to have you; but take your money, my man."

Philip meekly took the prize, thus ungraciously and ungenerously tendered, and was about silently to retire when he was again stayed by the voice of his former master.

"You don't look any great things, Martin; now don't you think you had better have thought twice about it before you threw yourself out of a good place?"

"I thought more than twice about it, sir," Philip ventured to reply.

"Ah, and have thought more than twice about it since, I dare say, Martin," continued the president, in a slightly sneering tone.

"Yes, sir, I have," the man answered, still quietly and meekly. He was evidently abashed; for by this time, many eyes were upon him; and there were some, probably, who wondered at the unusual course the president was taking. There were some sympathizing glances, too, cast towards the poor man, but he did not observe them.

"Well, then, don't you think you had better have given up your nonsensical doings, and kept a good place?" asked Mr. Woodlands.

"No, sir," said Philip Martin, firmly. "I have never been sorry for what I did, and I don't think I ever shall. I beg your pardon, sir," he added, "if my saying so offends you, but you asked the question."

"As obstinate as ever," observed the squire; "there, you may go." And, glad to escape from the ordeal, Philip bowed and left the tent.

"There's gratitude for you!" said Mr. Woodlands, turning to a gentleman near him, who had listened attentively to the foregoing conversation. "That man, now, was one of my gardeners; I had brought him up from a boy, sir, and kept him from the workhouse, and now he can defy me to my face."

"Why did he leave your service, did you say, sir?" asked the gentleman, quietly.

"Because he chose to set himself up for a saint, sir," said the president, scornfully, "and was turning the whole parish upside down with his nonsense. But I beg your pardon, Mr. Lee, I think you are a little in that way yourself;" and Mr. Woodlands laughed.

"I cannot say," Mr. Lee replied, mildly; "I believe, however, that your gardener is not the first man who has been accused of turning the world upside down. Was the man honest and sober?"

"Oh yes, he was well enough if it had not been for his new religion; and whatever you may say, Mr. Lee, I like to stick to the good old faith."

"So do I, sir," rejoined Mr. Lee, drily. "Was the man clever?" he asked.

"Oh yes, he was a decent workman," said the squire, rather unwillingly it seemed, and broke off the conversation which had occupied but a minute; and then another cottager was introduced to receive the next prize.

Soon afterwards Mr. Lee left the tent, but he returned in a short time—not, however, till his eye had rested on the man whom he sought.

"Those are fine pansies of yours, my friend," he said in a friendly tone, and laying his hand on Martin's arm.

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the poor man; and he spoke so gratefully for this slight encouragement, that Mr. Lee could scarcely forbear smiling at his earnestness; but he did not smile, for the man looked careworn and sorrowful. Instead of this, he offered to purchase the prize pansies, but Philip had already sold them to a gardener.

"Have you any roots of the same sort to dispose of?" the gentleman asked.

"A few, sir, but I brought the best assortment I could to the show."

"Well, never mind, I have a great fancy for pansies; we used to call them 'heartsease' though."

"Yes, sir," said Philip.

"Do you know any other sort of heartsease, my friend?" asked Mr. Lee.

A bright smile of intelligence crossed Philip's countenance as he replied, "Yes, sir, thank God, I do; heartsease for heart trouble you mean, sir."

"Yes, I do; well—but about these pansies, if you tell me where you live, I'll try and get to your garden; I dare say I shall find some that I shall like." G. E. S.

"LORD, I WILL FOLLOW THEE; BUT—"

"LORD, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house," Luke ix. 61. The man who said this obviously regarded it as his *duty* to become a follower of Christ; and probably the same may be affirmed of some of our readers who do not yet serve Christ. They cannot but allow the validity of the Saviour's claims, even though practically refusing to submit to them.

But there was more than the mere conviction of duty. He had actually *resolved* to follow Christ; and in that respect

there are many who resemble him, who, as yet, are not truly devoted to his service. They *intend* to be Christ's, they will believe his gospel, and then their whole life shall be a life of willing obedience to his commands. So far good. A right resolve is an important thing, even though as yet it be nothing more than a resolve. It is at least a step in the right direction.

There is still something else to be observed. The man did not intend to carry out his resolution *at once*. There was one thing—only one thing which he wished to do, and it seemed very natural that he should desire to do it. He would go and bid them farewell which were at home. But Jesus would not suffer him. Possibly he knew that if the man once reached that home, there would be exerted upon him influences which would oppose his engaging in that service to which he had pledged himself, and so the request was refused. "Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God," Luke ix. 62. There are many who would follow Christ, who are strongly inclined and even resolved to do so, *but* there is something in the way which prevents their following him *now*.

"Lord, I would follow thee," says one; "*BUT it would separate me from my most cherished friendships.*" There are cases in which the man who follows Christ must do it with the certainty of cutting himself off from some, if not all, who have loved him. He must literally bid them farewell which are at home at his house. In almost every instance of religious decision, there are some whose friendship must be abandoned. That friendship need not be formally relinquished, it will cease of itself because of the want of accordance between the views and pursuits of the respective persons. No wonder that such a separation should occasion a severe struggle; yet there are considerations which ought, notwithstanding, to secure a decision for Christ. If there were presented to you some splendid prospect of worldly advantage, which should remove you from the scene of your friendships, or so occupy your thoughts and your time that you must of necessity relinquish the intercourse which had given you so much pleasure, there might arise a feeling of bitter regret, and perhaps many tears might be shed, but still the separation would be made. If you were going to make a voyage to some distant land, and if on reaching the port from which you were to sail you found one vessel well fitted and strong, going

straight to your destination, but amongst all its passengers not one whom you knew ; whilst on another, of whose security you had reason to entertain the most serious doubts, there was a band of your gayest friends bent only on pleasure, and having no idea of sailing to that country for which you were bound, you would not hesitate a moment which you should choose. You would say at once, " I have not come here for pleasure, and it is not for pleasure that I am about to commit myself to the ocean ; I will take my passage in the vessel which will convey me to the place I seek, and I will hope to find on it company which will recompense me for that which I must abandon." And so if the friends you have hitherto preferred be not journeying to heaven, if they be journeying in quite another direction, and would lead you in that other direction too, ought there to be a moment's hesitation what you should do ? But are there no friendships for the Christian ? Yes, and commonly speaking better, more profitable, more enduring friendships than those of the world. And most and best of all, there is the friendship of Him who has at his command all the resources of the universe, and whose favour can richly compensate even for the abandonment of every friend, and for the frowns of all the world.

" Lord, I would follow thee," says another ; " *BUT it would require from me most serious sacrifices.*" There are those who, if they would serve Christ, must " leave all and follow him," and there are others who, though scarcely called upon to make such a surrender, would yet have to give up much if they would be faithful to their convictions. For instance, a man may be engaged in a pursuit which involves him in a systematic violation of the sabbath, and that Sunday traffic, as he is situated, may make all the difference between prosperity and poverty ; or his calling may be positively unlawful ; or there may be something about the mode in which he has been wont to transact his business, which, though sanctioned by the concurrence of all who are engaged in the same line, he now sees to be wrong. It is no uncommon thing for men so situated to say, " If it were not that such a sacrifice were required from me, I would be a Christian. Were I only placed in the same favourable circumstances with many around me, I could decide at once ; as it is I have scarcely resolution to do so." It may be admitted that it requires no little strength of principle, and no little faith, for persons so circumstanced to say, " I will do what is right ;" but, it may be demanded, ought

anything to stand in competition with the expressed will of Christ, or to interfere with the salvation of the soul? The whole world, much less so small a portion of it as any man can secure, were but a poor recompense for the ruin of the soul. Besides, though every thing that is feared should come upon a faithful servant of Christ—loss in every possible form and utter beggary—God can, even in the present life and in the midst of all that poverty, give manifold more—more in true peace of conscience and in the gladness which springs from the enjoyment of his favour ; and beyond all that, " in the world to come life everlasting."

" Lord, I would follow thee," says a third ; " *BUT it would abridge my liberty.*" The idea of many seems to be that from the moment a man begins to serve Christ, he will have to bear a yoke which he will find to be most galling and irksome ; he will have to encounter all kinds of restraint, and bid farewell to every thing like real enjoyment. Now it is not to be concealed that there are pleasures in which multitudes greatly delight, but which religion positively forbids. Placing its solemn law upon them it says, " As you would be a true servant of Christ, and as you would inherit everlasting life, you must refrain from these." And because such pleasures are forbidden, the gospel is charged with abridging man's liberty. But why are these things forbidden ? Is their prohibition simply a matter of caprice, or does not God contemplate in that prohibition our true welfare ? Our welfare undoubtedly. The tendency of those pleasures is to destroy, both body and soul. The bondage is really on the other side. It is the man who yields himself to these things who is the slave, and not the man who from an enlightened sense of duty to God refrains from their indulgence.

" The sensual and the dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion ! In mad game
They burst their manacles, and wear the name
Of freedom graven on a heavier chain."

It is not to be denied that there is pleasure to be derived from these sources. We do not seek to depreciate them. To reason with many on the ground of their worthlessness would be of no avail. " They are enough for us," they say, " and only let us have them in abundance and we care for nothing else." But we would say to such men, taking another ground, and even admitting for the sake of argument that the " pleasures of sin" are all they imagine them to be,—here is some-

thing unspeakably better, Christ's service abounds with the most exalted joys, and joys too which are most enduring. There are pleasures of intellect, pleasures of elevated and purified affections, "pleasures of memory," and "pleasures of hope." There is no blessedness like that of the Christian, and that blessedness awaits a glorious consummation in the joy of his Lord in heaven.

"Lord, I would follow thee," says yet another, "*BUT it would expose me to ridicule.*" And that is no uncommon thing. As soon as a man becomes truly religious he is often enough assailed by a perfect hurricane of invective, or perhaps the lighter shafts of raillery and ridicule may be directed against him; and to many minds there is nothing more terrible. Too frequently the very prospect has deterred men from the decision which they had all but resolved to make, and they have turned aside from what they knew to be the path of incumbent duty, never more to find it. That man is hardly a man who descends to do wrong, because he knows that he will be laughed at if he does right. But especially in this matter ought there to be a high moral superiority to the derision of the world. Why heed it, when it is beyond a doubt that those from whom it proceeds are utterly mistaken and wrong? Why heed it, when there can be set against the annoyance which it may occasion, the assurance of His approval who smiles on every conscientious endeavour to do his will, and who will appear at last as the Judge of the universe? Better to endure the frown of the whole world, than the frown of Him from whom heaven and earth will alike flee away. Better have his commendation than that of all mankind, if his were wanting. He has promised to confess the man who has the courage to confess him before his fellow-men, and that too in the presence of his Father and assembled angels, in the day of final doom; whilst he has declared on the other hand that he will be ashamed of the man who is ashamed of him.

There is, in short, no plea which can be urged for refusing to follow Christ which is not utterly futile and worthless. And there is everything about his service which ought to lead to immediate and uncompromising decision. It is a rightful service; for whilst he has a claim on every one of us as our Creator, he has secured another and we might add a stronger claim by his death on the cross. Think also of the blessedness of the service. "His commandments are not grievous; his yoke is easy and his burden light," and "in keeping of his

commandments there is great reward." No service has nobler associates ; for the best and greatest men have been the servants of Christ. Its issues too are immortality and heaven. Say, dear reader, as you ponder all this, and hear the voice of the Saviour saying, "Follow me," Lord, by thy grace, I will follow thee now.

S. G.

"WHO TEACHETH LIKE HIM?"

A MESSENGER one day arrived at the dwelling of a minister of the gospel, in one of the half-civilized settlements of Canada, to entreat him to visit a dying man at a distance, who desired to partake of the Lord's supper, and to converse with a Christian brother before his departure hence.

The pastor, jealous for the truth, shrank from the risk of encouraging any superstitious resting upon an ordinance which is the privilege of the believer, but which must be simply mockery in the formalist, and hesitated as to that part of the request. He questioned the messenger until tolerably assured that the summons came from one who knew something of the way of salvation, and the commemorative meaning of the rite, and then, in his own little carriage, commenced a journey of twenty-five miles into the depths of the forest.

After travelling some ten miles of a troublesome, ill-kept road, he was glad to exchange for a vehicle more stout and suitable to the expedition, which jolted him in great discomfort about five miles more. He then resigned this mode of progress, and mounted the horse, which soon showed disinclination to proceed at all further into the dark and pathless wilderness, and the guide suggested that the remainder of the distance should be performed on foot. Much time had been already occupied on the way, and the good pastor began to doubt whether, after all, any human habitation would be found in the secluded and intricate region to which he had been led. But commending himself to God's protection, and cheering himself in the hope of being sent either as a comfort to a believer or as the instructor of the ignorant, he cheerfully persevered in following he knew not whither, until at last by starlight the little clearing was discerned, the log hut gained, and his hand was gratefully clasped by the dying man who so earnestly desired his presence.

"It is forty years since I saw the face of a minister of Christ," said the old settler, "and I want now to hear from

one accustomed to many experiences, whether that of other believers is like mine; and to prove that I in my lonely solitude have found the same Lord, received the same faith, and been baptized with the same Spirit who unites others to him."

The little story of the process by which Malcolm had attained the faith and hope with which he now rejoiced the heart of his attentive listener, was drawn out by degrees, as his weakness permitted him to detail it, and may thus be gathered up from his interrupted recital.

For many years Malcolm had enjoyed all the pleasures of freedom and self reliance, in the wild abode where he had chosen to make his home. Strong, healthy, and active, he was as happy as he desired to be, and no idea of anything beyond the forest, or above it, except the stars and the moon and sun which brilliantly shone from its sky, gave any trouble or concern to his thoughts. He fancied himself a lover of solitude, and had sought away from the haunts of men some "boundless contiguity of shade," where he might live independent of the world, where neither fraud nor insincerity, nor slander should pursue their victim, or interfere with the honest results of healthful voluntary labour. But he contemplated his retreat in company with a sympathizing and affectionate wife; there was always a response to his suggestions, congeniality with his will, and moreover there gambolled by his side a merry-hearted child, whose shout of joy always welcomed him home after temporary absence in the successful bear-hunt, or the commercial journey to the nearest settlement.

But a time of sorrow came at last, a time of such anguish and desolation as bowed down the manly spirit of the settler, and prostrated all his happiness. One sad evening he stood alone within the fence which surrounded his little dwelling, formed of the stumps of trees felled by his own hand; and at the foot of one which had been permitted to retain its stately proportions, as an ornament to the enclosure, was a new made grave which he had just covered again with earth. Death had twice recently visited his home, and beneath that mound now rested the remains of the mourner's wife and those of his only child. Solitary indeed was the log hut now, and Malcolm shuddered as he re-entered it when his trying task was done. How dreary was the great interminable forest, how chilling the loneliness, how oppressive the silence! Nevertheless he resolved to stay there and die, for there lay all he loved on earth, and none in all the world, either the old or the new, now remembered or cared for him.

Few ever passed by his dwelling ; but if a benighted hunter or a wandering Indian chanced to light upon the spot, he always found hospitality and guidance, and departed pitying the solitary whom he could neither comfort nor assist.

A dreary summer passed away, and winter again clothed ground and trees in its icy mantle ; the pine branch must be lighted, and the log kept burning to preserve life, and Malcolm was driven to find some in-door occupation which might divert his miserable thoughts. His books, bought at different times, or originally his companions from the old country, were read through again, and he eagerly searched through shelf and chest for something new or less familiar. At last he carelessly took up a strange volume. How came it there? Ha, it evidently belonged to the emigrant chest, for in it was his name written by his father's hand, and it had been presented to him when attending the village school. It was in wonderful preservation for its age, though he remembered to have seen it in the hands of his careful wife, and some of its simple words had been spelt by their child, whom she taught to read.

Malcolm hesitated, laid it down, took it up again, and finally seated himself with it in his hand, to turn over its pages, and to be carried away into a train of meditation, without knowing how it originated, nor how long it lasted. Strange thoughts connected with that neglected book came rushing across his mind, not new, but very old and long forgotten, of home and school, the old church, the village pastor, most likely long since gathered to his fathers ; the prayer, the text, the sermon—how vividly arose the recollection of those young days, as they seemed to leap back over the gap of many changeful years ! It seemed as if he were a boy again, hastening to school, contending for the prize, listening with respectful attention to beautiful words of holiness and peace, as they fell from the good pastor's lips ; nay, some of the very words themselves seemed to sound again on his ear ; whence did they come ? were they mere human fancies that spoke of a triune God, one of whose significant names was " Comforter."

" Oh, if such be God, would that he might comfort me," murmured the lonely man, looking eagerly into the old but unworn Bible, only to relapse again into reverie as before. But now passing on from those early days, his memory traced through after years of many scenes and changes, but with one idea pursuing him through all ; that he had forgotten God and lived without him in the world, had disobeyed his laws,

and had never thought of salvation or condemnation, nor dwelt with hope or fear upon the realities of eternity.

And now he was in affliction and needed comfort, but how dared he present himself before the mighty God to demand the exercise of one attribute in his behalf, after living a lifetime in disregard of all the rest? By what way could he ascend, by what plea seek admission to that holy presence? And yet a strange persuasion that only God could supply his need urged his spirit to the effort. He wanted comfort, it was a sweet word, full of meaning; it spoke of sympathy, companionship, peace, hope; and now it must be of a kind that could not be disturbed by external circumstances, for never again could he sit under the shadow of a gourd, whose deceitful root was accessible to the worm.

But if the great God could condescend to be man's comforter, the distance between the Holy One and the unholy must be removed, to admit of the free and happy unreserved intercourse of renewed friendship. Sin, its penalty, its guilt, its dominion, stood in the way, and the chasm was terrible. Oh, "How should man be just with God?" was a question as needful to be solved in the Canadian forest, as in days of old in the land of Uz. It was a solemn inquiry, and an answer to it absorbed the energies of Malcolm's awakening soul.

There was none to instruct but the only one who can truly "teach to profit," and He disdained not the task. In a little while the search into Scripture taught the inquirer that he was no longer alone, without an eye to watch over him or a heart to understand him. He felt that there was a presence from which it was vain to flee, that "the wings of the morning" or the "darkness" of night could not bear him away, nor conceal the deep recesses of his being from the searching eye to which "darkness and light are both alike." To the law and the testimony then he earnestly applied, resolved to hear what the Lord God would say unto him, whether good or bad, pardon and peace, or anger and condemnation.

In the prostrating view of his own sinfulness and alienation from God, his long neglect of all that was good and holy, his selfishness and rebellion when thwarted and bereaved, poor Malcolm was almost crushed to despair; but just then when pride was broken down, and sin lamented and confessed, the happier office of the effectual Teacher was fulfilled, and Jesus Christ was unveiled from the clouds of unbelief and fear, and presented to his heart as the propitiation for sin, whose blood cleanses from its penalty and guilt; as the "mercy seat" where

a compassionate God meets and communes again with man in happy intercourse ; as the Daysman between both, whose holy life was one uninterrupted response to the Divine law, and his death an infinite atonement for its violation.

And now what unthought of blessings unfolded daily before the student of God's word ! Now the chasm was filled, the distance gone, for God and the sinner met in Christ. Now through this channel of communion what messages of love and grace came down, and what prayer and praise went up ! Now, fears and hopes, joys and sorrows, could be poured forth in unreserved confidence, with answering assurances of sympathy and affection.

The process which had brought him to God was remembered by Malcolm with tender regret that it was needful, and yet with fervent thankfulness that at any cost it was done, for through it he had become a changed man, " Old things had passed away, all things had become new." He had found access to God ; by Jesus Christ he had peace with God ; he rejoiced even in tribulation, and reckoning that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed, he was fully, richly, abundantly comforted, and the joyful hope of heaven henceforth brightened the little while of his future sojourn upon earth.

Could Malcolm doubt that, thus taught of God the Spirit, through the instrumentality of his long neglected Bible, he had realized true religion ? What though no human voice had interpreted the word, and no human hand pointed the way ; what though no ordinances were accessible, no forms of ministration employed ; the great High Priest had himself conferred the essential blessing, had consecrated the solitary hut as a house of prayer, and made the desolate heart of its occupant a temple of Christian peace. God had been his teacher, and " who teacheth like him ?"

Oh no, Malcolm had no doubt ; but it was sweet to his heart in his dying hours to hold converse with a fellow Christian who could understand him, and praise with him the God who had dealt so bountifully with him. Ill health had hindered all his plans for rejoining the society of man, for had Malcolm lived it could no longer have been " unto himself," in selfish seclusion and uselessness ; but his summons had come, and he was going home, in the enjoyment of the same grace and peace which had saved and comforted Abraham and Moses, and Isaiah and Paul, and all the people of God from first to last, whether their names are recorded for our encouragement, or written only in the Lamb's book of life.

It was a happy night to the servant of God who had travelled all day through the forest, little expecting that he came not to instruct, but to be instructed and refreshed by the brother who lay dying before him. Most gladly he partook with him of the emblems which their Lord had rendered significant of himself and his truth, and commanded his disciples to receive "in remembrance" of him; and most reluctantly the minister left the scene of God's own sovereign and independent triumph, declaring that had the journey been twice the distance, and its discomforts and difficulties sevenfold, he would thankfully encounter all again, to witness such a proof of the blessing of those Scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation, and of the serene repose of Christian faith on the promises of a faithful and trusted Saviour.

In a little while after Malcolm fell asleep, and the kind hands of the passing stranger, who had guided the pastor to the hut, laid his body by those of his departed family at the foot of the forest tree.

B. T.

HOME REVIEW.

ROLLIN'S ANCIENT HISTORY.

"THE book I would now recommend to you, my dear children, is Rollin's Ancient History," said Mr. Travers.

"Is not that a very long work, papa?" Emma inquired.

"Rather so; but when a history is in every other respect to be approved, I would not object to it on that account."

"But is not a knowledge of the chief events recorded in history, and their dates, sufficient without entering into the details of what happened so long ago?" said Richard.

"I think not, my son. Abridged history must necessarily be confined to the mere chronicling of names, years, and outward events; but this, in my opinion, in a great measure destroys the benefit which may arise from the study of it. History, when it seizes and expands before us the spirit of men, times, and actions, is, as one has observed, 'in itself alone a philosophy above all other kinds of philosophy, rich both in the materials and the means of application.' By following the history of remarkable nations, and thus becoming acquainted with human nature as displaying itself under the guise of manners very different from our own, we learn to understand our own manners and our own nature better than we could otherwise have done. From history we also acquire what cannot but be interesting to persons of taste—

a knowledge of the manner in which arts and sciences were invented, cultivated, and improved. In doing this you will perceive, doubtless, with admiration, that the nearer we approach those countries once inhabited by the sons of Noah, in greater perfection do we find those arts and sciences."

"This is interesting, papa," said Emma, "and is not, I suppose, the only instance in which we shall find history corroborate Scripture."

"Certainly not, my dear, and the obligation is mutual. I was repeating to you an opinion that history teaches philosophy; and a Christian writer has well remarked, 'The best key to the theoretic philosophy of history (that history which is *man's* collection of the various providences of God) is obviously knowledge of the Bible, which is God's own published *selection* from these providences.'"

"Reading history with the view that it is a record of the various providences of God," said Emma, "must greatly add to the interest, and to the profit we derive from it."

"Indeed it must. Nothing gives history a greater superiority to many other branches of literature, than to see in a manner imprinted in almost every page of it, the previous footsteps and shining proofs of this great truth, that God disposes all events as supreme Lord and Sovereign."

"Do the Scriptures in any other way throw light upon profane history?" asked Richard.

"Yes. Rollin himself has remarked that God discovers to us in the Bible, a part of the relation of the several nations of the earth to his own people; and that this little diffuses light over the history of those nations. It displays the secret thoughts of princes, their prospects, their pride, and impious ambition, and reveals the true cause of victories and overthrows: above all, teaching us what judgments the Almighty forms both of princes and empires, and consequently what idea we ought ourselves to entertain of them."

"But, papa, it is impossible not to admire the great men of whom we read in history," observed Richard.

"I do not think it unlawful, Richard, to admire whatever is beautiful in the actions, or true in the maxims of the heathen; but an inordinate admiration of the characters of those who are called great men, often leading the young to take them as models whereon to form their own, is most destructive. An acquaintance with that blessed book which tells what is really good and really evil, is the preservative from this danger; showing what God thought of monarchs

and conquerors so much boasted of by antiquity, who were not influenced by a desire to serve their fellow-creatures, but by self-interest and ambition. The Holy Spirit represents them under the image of monsters and cruel wild beasts, spreading desolation, and gorging themselves with blood."

"Is Rollin a religious writer, papa?"

"Quite so, Anne, and also a very pleasant writer. In his introduction he states his anxious wish that the work may not contain a single thought or expression that could contribute to inculcate false or dangerous principles. Next, that as he writes for the instruction of the young, and those who do not want to make deep researches into ancient history, he would not crowd it with any erudition not suiting this purpose, but would avoid not only what he calls 'the dry sterility of epitomes,' but the tedious accuracy of long histories which try the reader's patience. Therefore though the work I recommend be long, I think you will not find it tiresome."

"With the history of what kingdom does Rollin commence?" asked Emma.

"With Egypt, which served first as the cradle of the holy nation, and which afterwards was the scene of its severe bondage; then of the most astonishing miracles wrought in favour of Israel. There is a description of this remarkable country, with an account of its ancient inhabitants, of whom it may be said—

Antiquity seems but to have begun
Long after their primeval race was run.

Their manners and customs, learning and wonderful buildings, you will, I am sure, find interesting. All this serves to illustrate many passages of Scripture."

"In what way, papa?"

"One instance just occurs to me. Our historian informs us, on the authority of Pliny the naturalist, that a kind of flax called byssus grew in Egypt; it was extremely fine, and received a beautiful purple dye. We learn from Scripture that cloth made of this fine flax was brought from Egypt. Ezekiel, in chapter xxvii. 7, speaks of fine linen with brodered work from Egypt, and we learn from 2 Chronicles i. 16, that Solomon brought linen yarn out of Egypt, and the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price."

"Is not the soil of Egypt remarkably fruitful, papa?"

"Yes; and when we read of its producing fruits and vegetables so excellent as might have sufficed for the nourishment of its inhabitants; also the Nile from its fish, and the fatness

its overflowing gave to the soil for the feeding of cattle, furnishing the tables of the Egyptians with exquisite fish and succulent meat in abundance, we can the better understand the regret of the Israelites when they found themselves in the wilderness, and said, 'Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the garlic.'*

"What history comes next, papa?"

"That of the Carthaginians, a colony of the Tyrians or Phenicians, who settled on the northern coast of Africa, as you are aware. From this ancient people the Irish claim descent, and certainly not without cause, as a circumstance which I will relate will prove. In an old play by Plautus, a Phenician slave is introduced, who speaks in the Phenician or Punic language. This scene long puzzled the learned, but no one could translate it till it was met with by an Irish scholar, General Vallancey, who instantly read it without difficulty, from its similarity to the Irish, or rather its identity with it. Next comes an account of the Assyrian empire, which must, I think, be read with tenfold interest by those who are acquainted with the wonderful discoveries lately made among the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh, with which you were all so much entertained. These are, so far as the inscriptions have been deciphered, and paintings and sculptures understood, confirmative of Scripture history."

"Is not that only what was to be expected by those who believed the Bible to be written by the inspiration of God? It could contain nothing but truth," said Emma.

"Certainly, but we are by no means to despise such external evidences of its truth as God is pleased to give us, and as the discoveries of science are perpetually bringing to light. They give a great triumph over those who are so unhappy as to deny the inspiration of the Divine record, and may be the means of leading some to know and feel that it is such."

"Of course the history of the Persian empire comes after that of the Assyrian?"

"It does; and a minute account is given of the education, character, and actions of its founder, Cyrus, whose appearance as the deliverer of God's people from their captivity in Babylon was, as you are aware, predicted by the prophet Isaiah† long before Cyrus was born, even his name being mentioned. This remarkable man was interesting on his own account also; he was, perhaps, the wisest and most amiable heathen prince on

* Numbers xi. 4, 5.

† Isa. xlv. 1.

record, and from his earliest youth displayed these qualities. I will repeat one anecdote which will entertain you, and is a specimen of Rollin's manner. 'When Cyrus was twelve years old, his mother, Mandane, took him with her into Media to visit his grandfather Astyages, the king of that country. In this court young Cyrus found very different manners from those at his father's. Luxury reigned universally, for the Medes affected an effeminate life, and the habits of the Persians were very plain. The finery he witnessed did not affect Cyrus, who, without criticising what he saw, continued to live as he had been accustomed. Meanwhile he charmed his grandfather and every one else with his sprightliness and wit. Astyages made a sumptuous entertainment for him, in which there was a profusion of everything nice and delicate. Cyrus beheld it all with indifference, and on observing that this occasioned surprise to his grandfather, he said, 'The Persians have a much shorter way to appease their hunger; with them a little bread and cresses answer the purpose.' Astyages desiring Cyrus to dispose of all the meats as he thought fit, the latter distributed them to the king's officers, except the king's cup-bearer, to whom he gave nothing. Astyages testified concern at this omission, saying that the cup-bearer did not deserve it, he served him so dexterously. 'Is that all?' cried Cyrus. 'If that merit your favour I can soon obtain it; for I will serve you better than he.' Cyrus was immediately equipped for the office, and with a napkin on his shoulder, holding the cup nicely with three fingers, presented it to the king. His grandfather embraced him fondly, saying, 'No one could serve with a better grace, my child; but you forgot one essential ceremony, which is that of tasting.' 'No,' Cyrus said, 'it was not through forgetfulness that I omitted that ceremony, but I feared that there might be poison in the cup.' 'Poison! child; how could you think so?' 'Because I remarked at an entertainment which you gave some time ago, that when the guests had drunk of that liquor all their heads seemed turned. When they would have danced they could not stand.' 'Does this never happen in your father's court?' asked Astyages; 'and if not, how do they manage?' 'When they drink their thirst is quenched, that is all,' replied Cyrus, thus giving a delicate but striking lesson on sobriety."

"Cyrus was apparently a noble character," said Richard, "and such an anecdote of his childhood is interesting. What a pity that he should have been a heathen!"

"I do not think we need be without hope that this remark-

able man was brought to a knowledge of true religion, perhaps by means of the prophet Daniel. He showed kindness to God's people, and the way in which some of Isaiah's predictions concerning him are worded favour the idea. He is called God's shepherd, and a righteous man,* terms which, it seems to me, would not be applied to him if he continued in unbelief to the end."

"Well, papa, from all you have said, I am sure we shall find Rollin's Ancient History a pleasant study," said Emma.

"And a profitable one likewise, my children, if it be not your own fault. Such studies strengthen the young mind when properly followed. I therefore hope that in reading history you will always endeavour to view the characters and events described as a Christian ought to view them, and not in the false light thrown around them by those who are ignorant of God's holiness and man's utter depravity. As one has said, let habitual reference to God and to yourselves accompany the study, for thus alone can you pursue it to advantage. To *God* we must refer, because man, as his creature, is responsible to him according to the measure of light received: to *yourselves*, because the only use of an enlarged acquaintance with human nature, is when it becomes a glass wherein our own hearts are reflected. In this way historical knowledge may prove a real blessing." E. F. G.

THE DOCTOR'S HOPE.

"WHAT is the matter with that interesting looking person with her eyes filled with tears and her face half hid in anguish by her handkerchief?" said a medical friend, as we together left the hospital consultation room and walked homewards.

"That," I replied, "is a case of deep interest to me, and one that has drawn from me many a bitter regret. She is a person of very keen sensibilities, as her features and appearance testify; and one of much natural amiability of disposition, as you have already discovered. She has been under my care for some months, and whilst watching the sad progress of her malady I have noticed her expression to become more downcast and the tear to be more and more irresistible. She knows too well, by her decreasing strength and greater difficulty of breathing, that my art is failing her, and that but too surely she may look for an unfavourable issue. I would not disguise the prospect by pointing at the colour upon her cheek and

* Isa. xli. 2; and xliv. 28.

her yet moderately good appetite as any indication of returning health, for to deceive her would probably be at her eternal peril. I too know that ere a few months shall have fled she will have left us, and I see at each subsequent visit that her heart is ready to break when I tenderly make the necessary inquiries into her state.

"This is but one of many cases which come before me yearly, in which it is my fate to see some of the loveliest of the human race receding from this world step by step, knowing that they are passing away, and feeling with an inconceivable acuteness of perception the sad certainty to which they are hastening. Oh, if any one could see the horror which sin has entailed upon our race, let him come to that place and contemplate such scenes as these, and if he have a spark of feeling in his bosom he will be melted to tears, or the least atom of true religious philanthropy, and he will not only feel the calamities which have fallen upon our nature, but give himself heartily to afford true consolation to such grief as that which you have seen before you."

"But why does she seem so distressed? Is it that she suffers much pain in her affliction?"

"No, the suffering is something deeper than that which can rack the body. It is the mind, that delicately sensitive and amiable mind, which feels her position so acutely that nothing in this world can offer a sufficient solace. In this instance there are two, I fear three, causes for the anguish.

"She thinks of herself, and knows that soon she must leave a world which to her has had many charms; for whilst it may have dealt rudely with her sometimes, it has usually been kind. She has had sufficient of its comforts, and has keenly relished its enjoyments, and those not of the grosser kind, but those which do not so readily cloy the appetite—the affectionate regards of her relatives and friends, and some degree of mental culture. She has lived, and whether to purpose or not, she has lived to feel and to enjoy. She retains still much of that keen relish for such pleasures, and indeed they appear to her all the dearer that they are slipping from her grasp. All this is selfish, perhaps, but it is human, and is that which, to a great majority of our race, causes the sting of death. You have seen that she has not yet reached to the period of middle life, and a few months ago, comparatively, she, like you and me, looked forward to a green old age, and the long enjoyment of her providential comforts and the gratification of her delicate and keen sensibilities. Now she

feels that her hopes are blighted, and she looks with longing regret to the years of her girlhood and the yet recent period when she was an affianced bride, a wife, a mother.

"Then, again, she has an affectionate and gentle husband, who, with all his faults, yet anticipates her every wish, and three dear children who climb her knee, prattle their little tales in her ready ear, kiss her smiling cheek, and closely, ah, too closely, entwine themselves about her heart. She cannot bear to think of a widowed husband, and more especially of her infant baby left motherless and almost friendless in a world strewn with snares, and too apt to make victims of those the least fitted to sustain its injuries. When she takes her babe on her knees she convulsively grasps it and holds it before her with a fixedness of stare, as though she would read the depths of the future in its innocent little eyes, and then folds it to her bosom and bursts into a flow of tears. Is not that anguish?—a depth of woe unfathomably greater than anything which can proceed from a tortured body? That is it which makes me sigh when I see her, and leaves a feeling of sadness long after her form has disappeared from my view. What can the physician do to relieve so much distress? and if he cannot relieve it, how much does it stand in the way of his efforts to benefit the body!

"But sad as all this is, there is yet another cause of grief to her, and one which to me is more touching than any other, and which gives true intensity to those just mentioned. She knows that she is leaving her home in this world, and I ask her if she has a mansion in heaven; that she must quit her husband and her babes, and I suggest that there is a world where all may meet again, where sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and where God shall wipe away all tears from her eyes. I tell her that there is a heaven of pure delight offered to her, where she may bask in its sunshine, join in its lofty hymns, and drink eternal draughts of happiness; that she is leaving kind and long-tried friends who have loved her dearly, but that there is one Friend who sticketh closer than a brother, and is dearer than husband or mother, one who so loved her that he gave his own life a ransom for hers; that she must part with her much loved little ones, but she may there meet amongst the bright angels of heaven one dear infant whom she lost and whose loss she mourned, in that home where nothing that is unholy or impure can enter. I remind her that here is sin, suffering, and death; but there is holiness, boundless happiness, and eternal life.

“ But whilst I talk of these things she covers her face with her hands and gives way to a torrent of burning tears. She knows that all this is true, and she has known it since her childhood, but she has not as yet obtained the one thing needful. A sensitive and refined spirit has been too much content with the pleasures of time, and now she has no confidence in the attainment of those of eternity. She feels acutely the pains of temporal death, but how much more does she dread the horrors of eternal death! There is a nature which, whilst it is fitted for every enjoyment, cannot endure pain; and as she has not secured hold of eternal pleasures, she dreads the pains which may await her. Oh, if she would be comforted by looking to Jesus the great comforter of the afflicted and heavy laden, and by faith in his blood lay hold upon him as the Saviour, how would she long for those enduring and pure pleasures, and how would her then happy spirit enjoy their foretaste, and look forward to the moment when she should break through the trammels of her sin-afflicted body and fly to his bosom, and being quickened together with Christ, revel in the never-ending bliss of heaven. This change of spirit is a Christian's hope for a perishing fellow-creature; and could we but see it brought about in this case (as well as in others), we should greatly rejoice over a soul saved and peace obtained.

“ There is, however, an inferior, but yet important point of view in which this change of spirit may be regarded. It is not only the Christian's, but to some extent the doctor's hope. An afflicted body is in an unfavourable position for being relieved when disturbed by the throes of an agonized spirit; but when the patient possesses that peace which passeth all understanding, then is there better ground to hope that the physician's medicines may relieve and his words comfort, and then, with God's blessing, may he more trustfully look forward to improvement of health and a respite from the impending calamity. The spirit of a man will bear his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?”

In this point of view even it is gratifying to see that godliness is profitable for this life, as well as that which is to come, and that one of its advantages is, that it can comfort in suffering and in the prospect of death. Whatever may be the spiritual condition, there is a fitting remedy; for though your sin be as scarlet, yet, through faith in Christ the Saviour, they shall be white as snow; and though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool. He will forgive you, as a believer in him, your

sins, and will receive you into his family, and give you an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified. He loves beyond the love of any earthly being, and though by death you may lose much that you valued on earth, you shall obtain in heaven that which is of infinitely greater value—a crown of life, which the righteous Judge shall give to you in that day, and not to you only, but to all them who love his appearing.

A Physician.

"HAVE FAITH IN GOD."

BY A DISTRICT VISITOR.

WHERE is the Christian who cannot tell how frequently and deeply needful is this exhortation, "Have faith in God," amidst the various changes and anxieties of this uncertain world? In one form of trial, perhaps the most common and most harassing of any—I mean that of poverty or pecuniary embarrassment—most especially is this soothing whisper needed; and if the following statement of a fact which came under the writer's own knowledge should lead one so troubled to look up to God, it will attain the object for which it is related.

James S—, a poor, but pious and industrious man, was slowly sinking under the insidious encroachments of consumption, at the time when he first came under my notice as a district visitor. A large family, a heavy burden to a sickly and hard-working man, was not the only thing that had brought him down to helpless poverty. The comb trade, which furnished the chief employment to the poor of the village where he lived, had gradually declined, and even in the intervals of comparative health, when he was able to work, and his club allowance consequently ceased, he had the greatest difficulty in getting employment. His family then suffered great privations, for James was one of that honest, quiet class, who would endure and suffer much rather than obtrude their sufferings on the notice of others; who, even when they "cannot work," are yet "ashamed to beg."

At one time when they were not only without work or money, but without food in the house, James set out with a heavy heart to make application to a gentleman who had formerly employed him. It was unsuccessful, and the poor man retraced his steps in bitter disappointment, almost desponding, as he thought of the meeting with his wife and children. But he was a Christian, and he knew whose wisdom was thus trying him, and he turned for relief to the hand that smote him. As he walked slowly and feebly along the quiet

lane which led towards his cheerless home, he lifted up his heart to the God who feeds the ravens when they cry, asking bread for himself and his little ones from his Father in heaven. His humble petition was hardly ended, when he was overtaken by a neighbour, who kept one of those shops for various articles of grocery, etc., which the village poor find so convenient for their daily needs. This man entered into conversation with James, asking about his health and prospects, and then told him that a lady in the village had desired him to let James have two shillings' worth of articles from his shop weekly for some time to come. He then walked on, leaving the poor man overwhelmed with the unexpected relief, and full of gratitude to God who had fulfilled his promise, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," Isa. lxxv. 24.

Other friends were afterwards raised up, as need required, and James never wanted the necessities of life; but the remembrance of that providential supply was never effaced from his mind, and he related it to me some time before his death with a grateful emotion, which I seem even now to witness, though years have since passed by. He died in the faith of Christ, exhorting an ungodly relative with his last breath to turn to the Lord.

Simple as this true story is, it may suggest some serious, and some supporting thoughts. Many who are not Christians have yet a degree of faith in God's providential care, that gives them some consolation in the hour of trial. Those who are destitute of even this are miserable indeed, for circumstances will arise in every one's life in which he must feel the need of a stronger arm than one of flesh to lean on. But this kind of faith is quite distinct from the saving faith which brings us as helpless sinners to trust in Jesus alone for salvation; which takes God at his word in all things, believes his threatenings as well as his promises, and therefore flies from sin and clings to the Saviour he has revealed. Such faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, and must be sought in earnest prayer, for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Let each ask himself, "Do I thus believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?" and if our consciences bear us testimony that we have committed our souls to him, surely we ought to trust him also for the supply of every earthly want, remembering that blessed word, "Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

J. L.



"PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN."

PART III.

PHILIP MARTIN returned to his cottage from the fruit and flower show, exceedingly depressed. He had passed through many and severe trials, and he was still struggling hard with adversity. We took leave of him when he was out of work, and his small stock of money nearly exhausted; and he then had to apply to his parish, not indeed for relief, but for employment. This he obtained, but not without many harsh strictures on his folly in the conduct which had offended his former master, and many sneers also against his religion; so that he experienced the truth of that declaration, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

* 2 Tim. iii. 12.

The employment which the poor man obtained was hard and ill paid. He had to break stones on the road; and was subjected to much annoyance from some with whom he worked, and from a profligate and profane man in particular, who was at that time overseer.

But in the midst of these discouragements, Philip Martin and his wife had never, for one moment, thought of giving up their hope, nor felt regret that they had been enabled to persevere in their religious course. As opportunity served, the poor stone-breaker, with none besides his wife to encourage him, had tried to do good to the souls of his new neighbours, by quietly and modestly inviting them to hear the Bible for themselves, and by a daily conduct and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ: nor had these Christian efforts been altogether barren of results. "My word," says Jehovah, "shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it;"* and Philip Martin would have believed this to be true, even if he had seen no immediate results from his feeble endeavours. But he had witnessed some results which gave him encouragement to believe that God was with him.

Meanwhile, as often as they could, he and Hannah listened to the preaching of the gospel from the lips of him who had first been the means of awakening in them a concern for salvation; though timidity kept them back from personal intercourse with the minister.

Thus two or three years had passed away; and though suffering many hardships uncomplainingly, their cottage had begun to assume the appearance of comfort and domestic peace. Philip had not lost his taste for gardening, nor his skill: many of his leisure hours were employed in the cultivation of a piece of ground which had formerly produced scarcely anything besides thistles and nettles, until, at length, he brought it into good heart, and made it the means of adding something to the amount of his small and precarious weekly wages. He raised a number of choice flowers from seed, and as they came into bloom, he potted them into small pots, which Hannah carried—and a heavy burden it was—once a week to the town where the show had just been held, and obtained sale for them in the market. It was not much that had been thus gained; but the poor man and his wife were thankful for an occasionally prosperous journey.

* Isaiah lv. 11.

But a still further trial of their faith, and a still harder lesson of dependence on God, had befallen them in the illness of Philip, who had taken cold by constant exposure to rain and wind in his general employment of stone-breaking; and during the previous winter and spring, while he had been unable to work, the poor family had suffered great privation. It was shortly after his partial recovery from this illness, that Philip had ventured his contribution to the show—with what success we have already seen.

He returned to his cottage, then, depressed in spirit, and wearied in body. The walk had been long for a partially recovered invalid; and the interview with the squire had given him pain of heart.

"You have not met with much success, Philip?" said Hannah, as she gave him a cup of weak tea.

"As much as I expected, Hannah. My pansies gained a prize; and I sold them afterwards, though it was little I got compared with what I might have expected; but the man saw that I wanted money, I suppose, and drove a hard bargain. I should not be ungrateful, however; the prize and the sale together have brought in nearly a pound."

"It will help to pay the doctor's bill," said Hannah, "and that is a good thing. We must not be cast down, Philip."

"I cannot help being cast down, Hannah;" and then he told how unkindly he had been spoken to by Squire Woodlands.

"I have not often seen you so low-spirited as you are this evening, Philip," said his wife, when he had told his day's history, and was disconsolately silent. "I don't think," she added, "that God has forgotten to be gracious, and has shut up his tender mercies from us for ever."

Philip heaved a deep sigh. "I don't think he has either, Hannah," he said; "but if he should lay upon us more than we are able to bear—"

"He will not do that; oh, Philip, he will not do that. Does not his word say that he will not; but that with every temptation he will make a way to escape? We must not be faithless, but believing, dear husband."

But Philip seemed as though he were faithless this evening. His troubles, alas! were pressing sorely upon him. He was not only penniless (for the money he had brought home with him must all go to pay a part of his doctor's bill), but he was in debt: he owed money for rent; he owed a bill for bread, which a compassionate baker, who knew his necessities,

and believed in his honesty, had let him have on credit while he was ill. It was not much in amount ; but it was a heavy burden to him. Then his wife's clothing, and his children's, and his own, were worn, not to rags, certainly, but to scarcity and tenderness ; and when he could refit their wardrobes, to say nothing of his own, was more than he could even guess. In addition to these causes of discouragement, he was still far from strong and able to do a full day's work ; and a slight exposure to cold and wet might—the doctor said it would—bring about another illness."

"I cannot help being cast down, Hannah," he said again.

"Cast down, but not destroyed ; perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken," Philip," the wife said, soothingly and cheerfully ; "we have not been yet, and I don't believe that we shall be ; I don't, indeed, dear husband."

It is well when husband and wife mutually help each other with kind and wise counsel, and encourage each other when faith is weak, and sorrow presses heavily on the soul. Philip felt this ; and he roused himself, if not to cheerfulness, yet to resignation, and suffered himself once more to hope.

* * * * *

"Philip, you did not tell me about the gentleman you saw at the show, and who promised to come and look at your flowers," said Hannah, a few evenings afterwards, when her husband returned from work, tired and still distressed in mind.

"I did not like to speak about it, Hannah, for fear of a disappointment. I do not set much store on such promises ; though the gentleman had a kindly way of talking, certainly. But has any one been here ?"

"Why, Philip, have you not seen how your beds and little greenhouse have been robbed ?" his wife asked ; and if there was a slight sparkle in her eyes, it was not with impatience.

"No, Hannah ; I did not look at the garden as I came in. We shall have to leave it soon, and our cottage, too. If the back rent is not paid in a week, I shall have notice to leave ; the landlord told me so to-day."

The sparkle was quenched for a moment ; but it revived again as she put two guineas (it was in the old fashioned days of guineas) into her husband's hand. "There, Philip," said she, "you will find that you have lost a good many of your choice flowers ; but the gentleman paid well for them. He would not give me less ; he said that they would be fairly worth as much at some of the great nursery gardens, and he

could not think of giving less. He said that some of the sorts were very fine indeed, and that you must have taken a great deal of pains with your garden. He seemed to understand flowers uncommonly well, Philip."

"Who is the gentleman? what is his name, and where does he come from?" the poor stone-breaker asked, with a bewildered look, and a voice trembling with emotion. His hand trembled too, as he still held it open, with the glittering coins in its palm. He might well feel bewildered, for he would willingly and gladly have parted with all his flowers for a less sum than had been paid for a few of them.

"He did not tell me his name, Philip; but he came in a carriage, and said that he had a good many miles to go before he should be at home; and he talked so kind and Christian-like, Philip," said the poor woman, "that he made me look quite foolish, for I couldn't help crying a little. It isn't many kind words we have heard of late, is it? except from one another. And then the gentleman made me tell him about how you came to leave the squire's gardens, and a good deal more besides,—more than you would have liked me to tell if you had been by, Philip; but I couldn't help it, you know."

"Cast down, but not destroyed!" that was a true word you spoke the other night, Hannah," said her husband. "Let us thank God first, and then I'll go and pay the landlord his rent; that will be one burden the less for me to bear."

"And oh, Philip!" said Hannah, "if we could but always know how, and have faith to cast our burden on the Lord, should we not find that he is able to sustain us?"

Yes, Philip thought so; but somehow, he said, his fears and doubts had been too strong over him of late. It was a kind and tender way the Lord had taken to rebuke him; he felt that.

Hannah said very truly that the gentleman evidently knew a great deal about flowers; and also, that he had asked her a good many questions, and had spoken kindly to her. Mr. Lee, for he it was, had a fine country seat a dozen miles or more from Squire Woodlands' park; and he was as much attached to his gardens, if not so vain of them, as was Mr. Woodlands of his. He had noticed Philip Martin's pansies at the horticultural show, and, as one of the judges, had awarded to them a prize. He had taken more particular notice of the interview between the poor man and his former master, and the inferences he had drawn from it had not been in favour of the squire. Philip Martin's behaviour afterwards

had further excited his sympathy; this had led to the visit to the cottage.

The questions Mr. Lee had asked the poor stone-breaker's wife, were not without design. From the cottage he drove to Mr. Woodlands' residence, and obtained there an unwilling testimony to the sobriety and honesty of the discharged gardener, and also to his industry and skill. There was evidently no fault to be found in him, nor "occasion against him," excepting as it was found against him "concerning the law of his God." Incidentally, Mr. Lee gleaned other information also respecting the Martins; and then he returned home with the flower-roots he had purchased.

There was a post-paid letter, a few days afterwards, delivered at Philip Martin's cottage; and we will take the liberty of looking over the poor man's shoulder, as he with difficulty—not because he cannot read writing, but for another cause—ascertains its contents. It was a short epistle; but there was a good deal in it.

It was dated from T— Park; and it ran thus:—

"Philip Martin.—Dear Sir,²—I am directed by Mr. Lee, to inform you that he has a situation in his gardens at present vacant; and if it is worth your thinking about, and you should please to come over to T— Park some day, as soon as convenient to yourself, you will be better able to judge whether the situation is likely to suit you. You will have principally to attend to the flower gardens and greenhouse; and the wages will be twenty-one shillings a-week to begin with, and a cottage to live in, rent free. Mr. Lee wishes me to state this, that you may not form wrong expectations. Mr. Lee wishes me to say also, that you need not trouble yourself to bring testimonials of character, as he has already made inquiry in the proper quarters, and is satisfied with what he has heard.

"If the situation does not suit you when you have seen it for yourself, and obtained further information about it, Mr. Lee will, of course, pay you for lost time and expenses of journey: and if you should decide on taking it on trial, he would be willing to advance any small sum you may need to assist you in removing your family comfortably.

"Mr. Lee desires me to say one thing more, which is, that there is the privilege of a preached gospel at T—, and a good Sunday school also, in case you should like to send your children to it. Mr. Lee does not tell me to say, but I may, as well let you know, that the Sunday school is held in the

servant's hall at the park, and that Mr. Lee himself is at the head of it."

The letter was signed by John Dickson, as Mr. Lee's house-steward.

There was joy and gratitude that evening in the poor stone-breaker's cottage.

"Cast down, but not destroyed!" exclaimed Philip Martin, in a voice broken with emotion; "'persecuted, but not forsaken!'"

Before a week had passed away, Philip Martin was gardener at T— Park; and Hannah and her children were settled in their new home.

G. E. S.

CHRIST OUR SECURITY, OUR JOY, AND OUR CONSOLATION.

THERE are three things which we require, all of which are absolutely essential to our peace. As sinners, we need deliverance from the wrath of God; as intelligent beings, we need a principle of true happiness; and as those who are exposed to trial, we need a source of consolation.

All these blessings are secured to us by Christ. He saves us; he gives to us peace and joy; and he comforts us. And he does all this, because he assumed our nature and died upon the cross.

There is a beautiful passage in the prophecies of Isaiah xxxii. 2., in which these three blessings are ascribed to him. "And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Christ is thus A SECURE REFUGE.

Few things bring more vividly before the mind the idea of extreme danger than the driving hurricane and the pelting storm; and they are frequently spoken of in the Bible to describe the case of the sinner as exposed to the wrath of God, as in Psalm xi. 6; Isaiah xxviii. 15—18; and Matthew vii. 24—27. What then is the reality which is meant by these sublime and striking figures? In language the most plain and literal, man is declared to be exposed, in consequence of his transgression of the Divine law, to the awful and everlasting curse of God, Gal. iii. 10. There is much about that curse of which we can form but a very imperfect idea; but still we know enough to fill our minds with deep and overpowering alarm. The guilty and unpardoned sinner will stand without

a plea before the tribunal of God for judgment, and, in the presence of an assembled universe, there will be pronounced upon him the sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41. He is to be banished for ever "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;" and he is to endure, in the dark abodes of the lost, an anguish which neither tongue can describe, nor imagination conceive.

" Tempests of angry fire shall roll
Upon the rebel worm,
And beat upon his naked soul
In one eternal storm."

But behold a *refuge*! "A MAN shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." There is provided for the sinner a shelter in which the storm is for ever hushed, and he may abide in everlasting peace. And it is "a man" who affords this shelter. This may at first seem strange. "How," it may be asked, "can a man, himself a feeble and guilty creature, protect his fellow-men from the wrath of God?" No mere man could do it. But there is one who, whilst truly man, is much more than man. "The man Christ Jesus" is the infinite and everlasting God. "The Word," as the evangelist John tells us, "was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." John i. 14. He "took upon him the form of a servant," Phil. ii. 7. He assumed our human nature in order that he might die for us; and though the Deity could not suffer, the union of the Deity with the humanity gave to his sacrifice an infinite efficacy. He endured the curse which was due to us, and we can therefore be freely forgiven: "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25. He is, besides, invested with "all power in heaven and in earth," and that power is freely exercised on behalf of all those who believe in him. There can therefore arise no storm in which he cannot prove an all-sufficient refuge. Trusting in him, our salvation is sure. So, in connexion with a passage before referred to, in which the sinner's danger is described, (Isaiah xxviii. 15,) it is said: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone:—he that believeth shall not make haste," ver. 16. And in the close of the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle triumphantly bids defiance to the whole universe to invade the security of the soul that

trusts in Christ. We should be deeply thankful that there is provided for us such a refuge, and it should be the sinner's fixed resolve, and his earliest care, to flee "for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him."

Christ is, moreover, THE SOURCE OF TRUE HAPPINESS.

He is "as rivers of water in a dry place;" that is, in a desert, which the psalmist describes as a "dry and thirsty land, where no water is." This is a correct description of the world. It offers many sources of enjoyment, but it has nothing which can afford the spirit true satisfaction; nothing which can meet its unutterable longings for a portion and a rest. They who have proved its joys most fully have only been most deeply convinced that all was vanity. It has no refreshing streams, at which the faint and perishing traveller can drink and thirst no more. Often, indeed, his deluded fellow-pilgrims may cry to him and say, "There is water, there is water, here!" But when, in obedience to the call, he hastens to drink, he finds but a broken cistern or a poisoned fount, and his thirst unslaked consumes him still. Or the promised joy is like the mirage, which seems to the inexperienced traveller in the desert a broad and ample lake, reflecting—so perfect is the deception—the deep vault of heaven and the stunted herbage and the barren rocks of the wilderness, but which, after all, is mere illusion; for when he reaches the spot, he finds nothing but the dry and burning sand. The sinner may go if he pleases through the length and breadth of the earth in search of true happiness; but it will only be to return with the sad and disappointed acknowledgment, "It is a dry place."

Jesus Christ is "as rivers of water in a dry place." The same figure is employed in Isaiah lv. 1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." It was employed, too, by our Lord himself, when in the last day, that great day of the feast, he stood and cried in the temple, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." He came not only to deliver man from the *guilt* of sin, but also to save him from its *misery*. To every one who believes he imparts a principle of happiness which is fully equal to the desires and capacities of the soul. It is produced and maintained by his own Spirit. It results from the assurance of reconciliation to God, from a sense of the Divine favour, from communion with God, from the conformity of the affections to the Divine will, from the belief of the promises, and from the hope of immortality. It is *abundant*. There are *rivers* of water. The deepest

draughts cannot exhaust them. Though the whole earth should come to drink, those living streams of joy would still flow onward, broad, deep, exhaustless. And this happiness is *everlasting*. Those waters are intended to make glad the city of God, not only in time, but also in eternity. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," John iv. 14. We do not speak of what has been untried. Countless multitudes have drunk of these streams and found them most satisfying. Men of all orders of mind—of all peculiarities of taste—of all degrees of cultivation—of all ages, and of every land, have united in the grateful acknowledgment that they found in Christ, what they could find nowhere else, a joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Christ is also THE SOURCE OF SWEET CONSOLATION.

He is "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The allusion is still to a land of deserts and of drought. In such a scene the shadow of a great rock would prove most refreshing, because of its shelter from the scorching rays of the sun, and because of its delightful coolness. A weary traveller, in the heat of the day, would hail the shade of such a rock with scarcely less joy than the discovery of flowing and abundant streams. Let both be found together, and he would feel as though for the time at least there were nothing left him to desire. The idea then is, that in the sorrows of life, Jesus Christ can give abundant refreshment and consolation. He is "the refreshing of the weary." The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him—"to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," Isaiah lxi. 3. He passed through the sorrows of his earthly lot, that he might be "in all points tempted like as we are;" and that we might rejoice in the thought that "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." And whatever the trial of his people; be it sickness, or bereavement, or poverty, or disappointment, or persecution—he fills their hearts with peace, assures them of his continued presence and sympathy, and teaches them to rejoice in himself, even when all things else are gone. When his people have been most weary, then has "the shadow of the great rock" been felt to be the coolest, broadest, most refreshing. He has always been faithful to his ancient promise: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Reader! you need that Christ should be to you all that has

been described. Taking up the last thought which has been suggested, that of comfort in sorrow, we can assure you, that if you have never yet been overcome with anxiety and affliction, and felt that you were in "a weary land," it is almost certain that there are such scenes before you—scenes in which the best earthly consolations will be only like the prophet's gourd, which withered and left him without a shadow from the heat. You too will need "the shadow of the great rock." Sooner or later, the best sources of earthly happiness will prove unsatisfactory, if they have not already done so. And then, unless you have believed in Christ, you have no shelter from the stormy tempest of God's everlasting displeasure. Without Christ, you have no true comfort in sorrow, no solid happiness, and no hope for eternity.

But there is everything to encourage you to trust in Christ. He is prepared to be to you, even now, a refuge and a joy. Listen to his invitations and promises. "He that believeth on the Son hath life." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." The refuge is before you: do not turn away from it, and madly expose yourself to the pelting of the storm. The living waters are flowing at your side: do not seek instead for "broken cisterns which can hold no water." The rock extends its shade: do not refuse the shelter it offers you from the scorching heat. But now, repent of your past enmity, believe in Christ, and you will find by happy experience that he is to you "as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." S. G.

THE CAMBRIC HANDKERCHIEF.

Founded on fact.

IN one of the busiest streets of a busy city walked an elderly lady, accompanied by a young gentleman, who had but lately left school. Engaged in conversation, neither seemed to attend to anything besides, until the crowd pressing against them caused the young man to look round, when he perceived some boys of, what he called, suspicious appearance following their path. "Ah, I must watch my pockets," he said; "I had a warning when last here of what I may expect in your city."

"What was it?" inquired the lady.

"Probably what is only a common occurrence. My India handkerchief was picked from my pocket. 'Sir, your handker-

chief is stolen,' said a woman. I looked behind, and there was a young lad making off with it at full speed; I followed, and if my fingers were not as light as his my feet were. When he saw that I was likely to win the race he dropped his spoils, so I recovered my property; and the little rogue might have got off better than he deserved, had not a policeman witnessed the transaction, and provided him with lodging gratis; yet not quite so, for he had to pay by hard labour for board and lodging while he remained."

"And doubtless he came out of that lodging better qualified and better disposed to pick your pocket than he went in."

"That is no affair of mine, Mrs. Harman. My business is to punish a thief when I catch him. Let the chaplain reform him if he can."

"Aided by the society the poor culprit will be condemned to during his imprisonment," answered Mrs. Harman. "Ah, Henry, how different is the end man proposes in the case of an offender against himself, from that which our heavenly Father designs in dealing with far worse offenders. Man aims only to punish; God seeks to convert."

"But, my good friend, you hardly expect me to stand preaching in the street to every little thief whose hand I may find in my pocket."

"No, Henry, I do not. But as we are all interested in the suppression of vice, I would have you and all others alive to the importance of making use of the means by which these poor outcasts may become respectable members of society, and instead of handing them over on every occasion to the tender mercies of the law, endeavour to place them where their evil habits may be checked, and their intellects cultivated."

"All perfectly utopian, Mrs. Harman, believe me. Show me a single instance in which any good fruit has ever been found on one of these crab-stocks, and then I may try to act as you desire the next time my pocket is picked."

"You promise me that, do you?" said Mrs. Harman, looking up earnestly to his face.

"I may safely," he replied, laughing.

"Well, when we arrive at the cottage I will tell you a tale that I think will interest you."

This cottage, Mrs. Harman's residence, lay at the outskirts of the city, and was soon reached; and when she and her young friend were seated she began as follows:—"You may

have heard, Henry, from your mother, that I was once in a situation different from that which I now occupy ; that I was, in fact, almost wealthy. But with this portion of my history I am not going to trouble you, save only to mention that it was then the circumstance took place which forms the groundwork of my present story. I had driven out one day in an open carriage to make purchases in the city, and was returning home, when I had occasion to stop in a crowded thoroughfare, to speak to a tradesman whom I employed. While doing so, I forgot that at the other side of the open carriage lay a basket containing some valuable articles, and out of which hung a cambric handkerchief. Having finished my business, I turned round just in time to see a boy, apparently of about ten years of age, draw the handkerchief away, and he was on the point of making off with it when my servant caught him by the ragged collar of a miserable coat, and applying to him some not very complimentary epithets, was about handing him over to a policeman, when something in the boy's countenance struck me with compassion. He had not only the appearance of extreme want, but when detected in the theft hung his head with shame, a burning blush spreading over his wasted and pallid features. 'No, no, John,' I cried, 'do not give him up to the police. Let us try if we cannot do something better for him than that.'

"It was in vain that John declared the little vagabond deserved nothing but the treadmill. I resolved to have my own way, and to make an experiment with this unfortunate child. I told him where I lived, promising him a good dinner and a coat if he would come to my house that evening. It would have amused you had you seen the footman's face when he heard me inviting a thief to my house, and promising him a reward for coming ; predicting that I should soon have a visit from a gang of housebreakers, and that this 'little viper' would show them the way. I promised him to be cautious, and not to let the boy see any of the house until we had proved him. He came an hour after, and had I not been myself watching for him I should never have known of his arrival, for he hung about the back-door without courage to knock. Most unwillingly the cook sent him out a plentiful dinner, and I stood by while he ate it, or rather part of it, as he did not finish what he got ; when I urged him to do so, he asked leave to take the rest home. As yet I had asked him no questions, but now inquired where was his home ? Whether he had parents, or any family living ? Where his home was he would

not tell; but he had no father, no mother, no brother nor sister; and with much difficulty I gathered from his lips the following tale:—

“His father had been a labourer, and was killed by a fall from a scaffolding the preceding year. His mother went out charing, and earned a miserable pittance, which just preserved them from starvation. She had died about three months before I met him, probably from want, and he had not any one to look to for a meal but the owners of the lodging-house, one corner of a wretched garret of which he and his mother had occupied. These people would allow him to remain only on one condition, namely, that he would ‘*do something*’ for his own support. What that something was you can easily guess, and he soon learned the necessity of attending to their requirements. Becoming a regular street pilferer, if he returned home in the evening empty-handed he was beaten, and sent supperless to bed; and such had been his life from the time his mother died until I learned his melancholy story.

“I was encouraged in my desire to take some steps to rescue him from destruction, by perceiving that he was not yet hardened in crime; and I was still further encouraged by seeing a glow of pleasure on his countenance at my proposal to give him a bed in an out-office, and breakfast and dinner every day, provided he would give up his wicked practices, of which I tried to show him the evil; and after he had done what little he was capable of in our farm-yard, attend a school every day. Well washed, well clad, and looking fresh and strong after even one week of his new life, Ned C—— went to the school, where he did full justice both to himself and his master. There was nothing which the master was capable of teaching, that Ned did not show he should, after a while, be capable of learning. There was one branch of knowledge in which his progress gave me by far the greatest satisfaction, I mean the knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation. He attended a Sunday school, and quickly evinced the deepest interest in the lessons there imparted. His behaviour became marked by so much propriety, he was so governed by the rules of religion and morality, that he obtained, I may say, even the respect of those who had known the circumstances of his early life. Still as he grew up, I could often observe symptoms of an uneasy and unsettled mind; and on my questioning him about it one day when he was just eighteen, he confessed to me that the one thing he desired more than any other was to get away from the scene of his juvenile wickedness, and to

seek his fortune in some foreign land. I could not blame him, and much as I valued him as a useful and trustworthy servant, I resolved to forward his wishes by every means in my power.

"I had then some friends in America, and to them I recommended Edward C——. He had laid by some money while in my service, to which I was glad to make such an addition as would provide him with a respectable outfit. The morning on which he went away, he said he had a favour to beg of me; I saw his lip tremble and his cheek flush as he told me what the favour was. It was only this; that if I still had the remains of the cambric handkerchief, which had been the means of introducing him to me, I would allow him to take it with him. It would be of use to him in two ways, he said; it would remind him of what he once was, and keep him humble; and it would also remind him of her who had rescued him from his degraded condition, and keep him grateful. It was with many tears that I gave him the handkerchief; it had my name embroidered on one corner; he gazed on the letters, and folding it up in paper he asked my prayers and blessings, and departed. I heard from him in two months; he had got a situation in a counting-house. He continued to write frequently, and in about a year I had the joy of receiving a letter from his master, informing me that Edward C—— was every day standing higher in his confidence, and he had little doubt that he would one day do well in business for himself.

"Some years elapsed, and then the change in my circumstances took place, by which I was plunged from affluence into comparative poverty. I had to part with everything except what would enable me to furnish in the simplest style two humble apartments, into which I moved when I left my house. I could not bear to inform Edward C—— of the reverse I had undergone, and when I wrote merely mentioned that I had changed my abode, but this would not satisfy him. He begged to know why I had left my pleasant home, but I evaded his questions till I could evade them no longer, for he accused me of want of confidence in him, and of keeping back something that he ought to know. I then told him all, at the same time assuring him that I was very happy, as happy as ever, and that one of my pleasantest thoughts was that I had been the means of his prosperity.

"It was several months before I heard from him again, and one day, just as I began to wonder at his silence, I was told that a gentleman wanted to see me. Not feeling well, I was

unwilling to admit strangers, and sent to request that he would send up his name. The servant brought in reply, not a card, but a small parcel, which when I opened it I found to contain the cambric handkerchief! It was Edward C——. After the receipt of my last letter he had been prevented coming home at once by the necessity of arranging a large amount of business in the concern, of which he was now a junior partner. The moment he was free, he set out for Europe and came to me. I need only add there was no service which he could offer that he did not warmly and affectionately press upon me, but the utmost he could prevail upon me to accept was a long lease of this pretty little cottage, with the adjoining garden and field, where I live with every needful comfort, and possessing the ability to show kindness to the poor and the afflicted. Edward C—— returned to America, taking the cambric handkerchief with him, and he does not allow me to forget him."

"Well; Mrs. Harman, yours is really a very interesting story," said her young guest, "and has made me feel that if I had that poor boy whom I handed over to the police, I should be much disposed to see if some means could not be adopted for endeavouring to reclaim him."

E. F. G.

PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY.

No right-minded man can be indifferent to the welfare of his own country. Its soil may be less fertile, and its climate less brilliant than those of other lands, and there may be connected with it some social evils from which others are free; but still it is his country, and he loves it, and his prayers for its prosperity blend with those which he offers for his own welfare.

"Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
That never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?"

If we have only our own good in view, we should still seek the welfare of our own native land. The children of Israel were commanded, when in captivity, to pray for the peace of the city to which they had been carried captive, because in its well-being they should have peace. We are bound by the tie of brotherhood to all mankind. There is no man existing whom it is not our duty to love, and for whom we are not bound to pray; but our kindly offices and prayers are especially demanded for our fellow countrymen. And if there be

one land on the earth which especially deserves the love of her sons, that land is Britain. And one of the most effectual methods in which that love can be displayed, is prayer for it.

There is much in present circumstances to render us specially earnest in the presentation of such prayer. We are engaged in war; and, take whatever view of it we may, that is a calamity to be deeply deplored. There has been hitherto, it is true, much occasion for thankfulness, for our arms have not sustained any reverse which is worthy of the name, and looking forward to the future, we see no reason for misgiving or despair. Still it is no slight calamity which has befallen us. It is a calamity to have those passions fostered which are called out by war, and to have men's attention withdrawn from the peaceful pursuits of useful industry and knowledge, and from the engagements of Christian benevolence, that they may think of conflict and storm and siege. It is a calamity that so many of our fellow-countrymen should be exposed to the perils of warfare, that so many thousands should have perished, some by the sword of the enemy, and multitudes by privation and disease; that so many wives have been widowed, so many children orphaned, and so many families desolated. It is a calamity that so many, not only of our fellow-countrymen and our allies are perishing, but that our enemies—men endowed as well as ourselves with human sympathies, and bound as well as we by the tenderest ties of father, mother, wife and child—should be cut off in the midst of their days, and dismissed to their account from the excitement and horrors of the battlefield. And it is still further to be deplored that there is as yet little prospect of peace. The contest still rages, and we do not know what may be the result.

Now there are very different ways in which these events are regarded. Many are disposed to look entirely to what is human, and to the designs of men, forgetting that there is another and a higher hand concerned. Some think only of the ambitious man whose unrighteous encroachments on the territory of his neighbour induced the defence of the oppressed, and say that but for him there would still have been peace. Others condemn every step which has been taken by ourselves and our allies, as totally needless and unwarranted. Others still, whilst maintaining that the war itself is a just one, find much to censure in its management, and affirm that many of the evils we lament might have been obviated by common prudence and forethought. But whatever opinion we form of these points, the duty and the necessity of continual prayer remain

unaffected. A specific direction may be given to our prayers by the views we respectively entertain, but still there should be offered by every man who truly loves his country most earnest and persevering prayer that we may again rejoice in the blessings of peace.

"But," it may be said, "of what avail is prayer? Can we suppose that God will alter his plans, or interpose with some special exercise of power, because we ask him? Is it likely that He whose government and care extend not to a few families only, but to nations and the world, and whose plans are so vast that whole ages are necessary for their accomplishment, will alter his purposes because his creatures, proverbially short-sighted and ignorant, pray?" We do not profess to be able to explain how it is that the steady prosecution of his stupendous designs harmonizes with his regard to the prayers of his people, but that they do harmonize we have not the slightest doubt. Admit that the great ends of Providence are attained by a system of closely connected agencies, all moved at his bidding, may not prayer be amongst the mightiest of those agencies—agencies without which the results themselves would fail?

But not perplexing ourselves with reasonings like these, we might appeal to *commands*, enjoining prayer as a duty—to *promises*, assuring us of answers to prayer—but especially to *instances* which God himself has put on record of availing prayer. He has not only heard prayer when men have offered it for themselves, but when they have pleaded as intercessors for others, and have committed the interests of whole nations to his care.

Look at Abraham, interceding for the devoted cities of the plain. Those cities are doomed to destruction, and God does not conceal his purpose from the man whom he condescends to call his friend. The heart of the patriarch yearns over the multitudes who are included in that terrible sentence of death, and he would fain snatch them from destruction. He draws nigh and pleads that if in Sodom there be but fifty righteous, for the sake of those fifty the city may be spared—and the prayer is heard. Again he pleads that if there lack but five of the fifty, the judgment may be withheld, and again the prayer is heard. Emboldened, as it is right he should be, he pleads again, that if there be but forty, thirty, twenty, and even ten righteous men in the city, the tempest may be restrained, and each successive request to the very last is granted, and had there been ten righteous in the city it would have been spared.

The children of Israel are in the desert, having just left behind them the house of their bondage. Before them is the Red Sea, with its deep and mighty waters, and in close pursuit the armies of Egypt bent on their recapture or their destruction. Their leader feels the weight of his charge, and, concerned alike for the salvation of Israel and the glory of God, lifts up his earnest prayer to heaven. "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" is the reply; "speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward!" And, lo! the waters divide and become a wall on the right hand and on the left, and Israel passes through in safety. And as they stand on the further shore in the morning's dawn, they see the returning waters engulfing the chariots and horsemen of Pharaoh, and the hosts of Egypt sank like lead in the mighty waters. It is the fulfilment of promise and the answer to prayer.

There is arrayed against Jerusalem an Assyrian army of nearly two hundred thousand men, and its leader sends his insolent messengers to Hezekiah and his people, telling them that as other gods had failed to deliver their worshippers from Assyria, so would their boast in Jehovah prove a vain confidence. The king of Judah has no army which he can send forth against that mighty host, and all human help is vain. But his resource is prayer. He sends a message to the prophet Isaiah, urging him to pray. And then, himself entering the house of God, he spreads Sennacherib's letter before the Lord and prays. And his prayer brings down deliverance from heaven, for the messenger of death passes through the camp of the Assyrians, and in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand are slain; and Judah is delivered. Who, with instances like these before him, can dispute for a moment that there is a God in heaven who hears and answers prayer?

We often think and speak with feelings of mingled satisfaction and exultation of our country's greatness. Very likely if many people were asked to specify the causes to which, under God, we owe that greatness, the reply would be, "We owe it in part to the care of wise, faithful rulers, who have from time to time guided the helm of our national affairs; in part to our armies and navies, which have driven back the enemy who would have invaded our island home, and which have extended our conquests far and wide; in part to that spirit of enterprise which has so largely expanded our commerce, and enriched us with the resources of the world; in part to our civil institutions, which, take them for all in all, are surpassed by none besides; in part to our literature, full of noble and

spirit-stirring thoughts, expressed in a language which has grafted on its strong and racy Saxon not a few of the treasures of other tongues." And we should find no fault with such an enumeration. These are some of the secondary causes which have raised us to our present position amongst the nations. But we should add another; mightier than all, sanctifying all, blessing all, will be found the prayers of the holy—the prayers of men, many of them unknown to the world, but who, sometimes in the dwellings of the lowliest poverty, and sometimes in caves of the earth, and sometimes in dungeons, have poured forth their earnest prayers that God would bless their land. We could better dispense with our armies and mighty navies, than we could dispense with the earnest prayers of the believing church of God; for such prayers prevail with Omnipotence, and "move the hand that moves the universe."

We can every one of us pray. Let us then pray that God would still smile as he has so graciously smiled in times past on our beloved country; let us pray for the speedy restoration of peace; and let us pray that amidst all the changes of this changing world the kingdom of God may come, and his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. G.

POOR MARY.

ABOUT noon, when the bell rang for an hour's cessation of labour, two children might be seen near the premises on which John Willis was employed, waiting with his dinner. When the weather was fine, he led the way to a grassy hillock amidst a space of uneven ground on sale for building, and there seating himself with the children, disposed of the contents of the little old basket, and bright tin cans, which had been prepared for his meal. Whatever the food might be, it was carefully cooked; but if the basket were old, the platter cracked, the cup short of a handle, the fault lay with Willis himself, who made no scruple of smashing his own goods and chattels, whenever it suited his drunken mood; for his house was a drunkard's home, his possessions were pawned or sold for debts or drink, and the heart of his suffering wife was almost broken in helpless, hopeless sorrow.

Of the two children who waited while he took his dinner, to bring which was the only way of securing his performance of a full day's work, one was a tall, pale, thoughtful girl of thirteen or fourteen, and the other a smiling, bright little

creature between three and four years old, known by the pet name of Lilly.

"Is it nice, father?" asked the little child, as Willis seemed to enjoy his meal.

"Well, yes, it's pretty good, but perhaps not quite so tasty as it is sometimes."

"Mary cooked it," said the child, "and mother told her how to do it."

"Is your mother worse?" asked Willis, looking at Mary.

"Yes, father, I'm afraid so." She could not stand this morning, when she tried to get up."

"Did you go for a doctor, as I told you?"

"Mother thought perhaps she would soon be better, and she was afraid—"

"Afraid of what?"

"That she might not be able to pay him, nor to get the medicines," replied Mary, hesitatingly.

"Oh, nonsense! I can pay him." I have a whole week's work, and more if——. But go and take the doctor with you home, and tell him I'll pay him honestly every penny. Mind you do as I say, without asking your mother any more about it. Has she got some dinner?"

"It was all put into the basket, except a bit of crust," said Lilly.

"Mother has no appetite," said Mary, quickly, the tears springing to her eyes.

"Come and taste Mary's cookery," said the father, drawing Lilly towards him, and offering to feed her. But the child, gazing timidly into her sister's face, shrank from the kindness.

"Let us take it home for mother," said she.

"Eat it dear, if father wishes," said Mary. "Poor mother can't touch it."

Lilly accordingly ate the remainder of the dinner, and the two sisters turned homeward.

"The doctor is coming by and by to see you, mother," said Mary, gently kneeling down by the straw pallet on which her mother was lying, "and perhaps he will be able to cure you soon."

The poor woman tried to smile on the hope-lighted countenance that beamed tenderly upon her. "As it pleases God, my dear Mary; He knows best." And, alas! Mary also seemed to know what would be best, that "to depart and be with Christ," whom she loved, far away from the misery which had brought her to her present state, was "far better;" but

then what would become of her helpless children? Poor Mary's heart was full, and she hastened to employ herself, to hide the bitter tears which would no longer be repressed:

It was evening when Dr. M— arrived, and he was soon interested in his new patient.

Mary followed him anxiously, as with a thoughtful look he came from the inner room. "You can cure her, sir; she will soon be better, won't she?" asked Mary.

"She is very weak," said he, evasively. "She needs—" He paused, and looked round him.

"We are very poor, sir, but I hope we can get the medicine?"

"Yes, yes, I will take care of that, but you need other assistance. Surely you have some friends; do they know that your mother is very ill?"

"We have been helped, sir, until our friends can't do any more for us," said Mary, with burning cheek and quivering lip.

"Poor child! perhaps we can make more friends then, able and willing to help you; but I see there is something wrong; there is always a cause for such a state of things as I see around me. But I will not ask you now: we will try first to do something for your mother."

The kind voice, and promise of help, went to Mary's heart; but ere she could utter her thanks, a loud, lumbering, grumbling noise was heard, the house door flew open, and John Willis staggered in, scarcely able to stand.

Lilly flew into her sister's arms, Mary turned pale as death, and a long, deep sigh was heard from the inner room. Thus was revealed the cause of the poverty and destitution around, and the history of the decline and fall of temporal prosperity and domestic comfort, in a once thriving and happy family.

Dr. M— was answered. He saw through it all, and with a glance at Willis of anger and disgust, he left the house. In less than an hour he was there again, with his kind and Christian daughter, bearing restoratives and nourishment for the exhausted invalid; and Mary, whose thin pale face excited scarcely less concern, was compelled to share their kindness.

But Mrs. Willis did not improve; and notwithstanding the daffy care she now experienced, it was evident that sorrow and hardship, want and ill treatment, had done their worst, and she was sinking fast. But she was not ignorant of the happy secret which made the approaching change a blessed one to her believing heart. Now how she thanked God that her

three dear boys slept in their little graves, instead of being left to the control and example of a drunkard! And for the others, oh who dares to doubt the faithfulness of Him who has promised "grace to help in time of need," when the dying mother was able to commit two tender children to his guardian care under circumstances like these, and to be at peace concerning them, assured of his provident and protecting love?

"Mary, my dear child," said she one day, summoning resolution to speak of what she knew must inflict the keenest pang on her affectionate daughter; "I need not ask you to take care of Lilly. I know you will do that; but—your father, Mary, will you try to bear with him, and be kind to him in spite of everything, and stay with him as long as possible? Speak to him too sometimes, when he seems sorry for what is past, about God's promise to those who wish to amend, that 'sin shall not have dominion' over them, if they will only go to him to be kept from it. Oh, remind him meekly and kindly, that only God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us can keep any of us from sin; and when he sees you patient and forbearing, more so perhaps than I have been, he may see that it is real and true that religion does give victory over everything. Teach Lilly to love him, and to be quiet and obedient when he comes home. Pray for him, Mary; God has taught you to pray, and in time he will hear and answer you. And do not mourn for me. I am going to a happy home. Such peace is there, such love and blessedness! Oh, can it be indeed for me?"

"Yes, it is indeed for you! Nothing is too good or glorious for those who come to God by Jesus Christ," said the kind voice of the doctor's daughter, who had softly entered the room, and who observed a marked change, which suggested an impression that the hour of entrance to that rest was near at hand for the sufferer.

Mary was sobbing in an agony of distress, and Miss M—, at the mother's request, lifted little Lilly from her mattress to receive the last kiss and blessing; soon after which, Mrs. Willis became unconscious, and when her husband reeled home at midnight, it was to find Mary and her sympathizing friend gazing on the pale face in breathless anxiety, watching if yet again a look of love might unclothe the eyes, or a word of hope and peace escape the lips. But it was all over, and the wretched man was sobered and awed by the unexpected scene.

Willis had not believed the account given to him of the real state of his wife's health, and had manifested little sympathy in her short illness, deeming himself particularly praiseworthy if he worked all day, and only drank to intoxication in the evening. He was shocked at this unexpected crisis, and his grief was violent and uncontrolled for a time. Mary did her utmost to soothe and comfort him, and Lilly would climb upon his knee, and wipe away his tears with her pinafore, and ask him to love her "like poor mother, who could not love her any more now."

For a little while he was sober and industrious, and took Lilly to church, and seemed to wish to be an altered man: but again bad habits and bad companions gained the ascendancy, and again he was to be found at the public house, drinking, quarrelling, and sometimes fighting, and returning to his terrified children in a state of frenzy or stupidity. Often would Mary go to meet him on his way from work, and Lilly would sometimes entice him past the public house doors; but he usually slipped away, and then Mary, in dread of some accident, sought him again at night, as her mother had often done before her.

Things grew worse and worse, and but for the untiring kindness of Miss M—and her friends, the motherless children might have starved. Mary's heart almost failed her, but her God did not, and she often recalled her mother's charge, and prayed for her father, and for grace and guidance in her trying lot. She grew tall and thin, and more fragile than ever; she missed, more than language could express, the counsels and encouragement of her dear mother, and seemed to desire only to follow her as she followed Christ, who loved her, and made her all she had been.

One cold, wet, miserable night, Willis was later than usual, and Mary opened the door to listen for his uncertain footstep. Several times she had met him and guided his way past a deep excavation, dangerous to heedless passengers; and the dread of an accident there now possessed her mind. Time passed on. Mary thought of her mother, and of that frightful pit where her father might be killed in a moment, and pass into eternity in the midst of his sins. Then hesitating no longer, leaving Lilly asleep, and drawing her thin shawl round her, she went out in fast falling rain to seek her father. She reached his favourite resort, where, with boisterous merriment and muttered curses, a group of men were just issuing from the house. Willis was among them, and as the others turned on their

different ways, he was left alone, endeavouring to support himself by the walls of the houses as he crept along.

"I will lead you, father," said Mary, timidly touching his arm.

"Mary!" said he starting, and recognising her by the light of the street lamp. "What have you come out for?"

"To prevent you from falling down that dangerous pit, father. Let us make haste, for it is very wet."

"What makes you so frightened about me?" grumbled he, leaning his clumsy weight on the frail arm of his shivering child.

"Mother bade me do everything I can for you, father," said Mary, in a meek, faltering voice, that pierced like a sword to the drunkard's heart. He spoke not another word, but walked more steadily on, and they reached home safely.

The next day Willis went out as usual, not observing the effort with which Mary prepared his breakfast; but Lilly went to meet him at mid-day with the news that she was very ill. A violent cold had settled upon her; and in alarm, the conscience-stricken parent sought the medical friend who had ministered so kindly to his departed wife.

"It is a very severe attack," said Dr. M—. "Do you know how she took cold?"

"Yes sir, it was in caring too much for me," said Willis, covering his face, and weeping bitterly.

"Unhappy man! Your wife, and now your child, your noble, self-denying child!—you have destroyed their bodies, you cannot ruin their souls, but what will become of your own? May God help you to amend."

Inflammation set in, and Mary's recovery was soon found to be hopeless. Her wretched father's distress was now not passionate and fitful, but deep and solemn; and the kind friends who watched in tender interest over his child, trusted that this terrible lesson would not be in vain. After some days, the dying girl was only able to speak a few loving words to him and to her little sister, to thank Dr. and Miss M— for all their care; and whispering of her trust in Jesus, and her reunion with her mother, she passed away in a quiet sleep.

Lilly was a year older now, and better able to comprehend her loss; and when Miss M— would have taken charge of her for a time, and Willis gave her leave to go if she wished it, the child declared that she would rather "stay with poor father, and help him to be good." And she accompanied him to his work, watched near while he was employed, led him resolutely

home, and refused to be left without him for an hour. She made him read the Bible to her, hear her pray the little prayer which her mother and Mary had taught her, and seemed like a guardian angel to the penitent man. Sometimes she led him to the spot where his wife and daughter were laid, and when he mourned over the consequences of his sin, she reminded him that they were happy now, for they loved Jesus Christ, and he gave them his good Spirit."

Thus passed many months, and the consequences of sobriety and industry began again to be seen, even in Willis's desolate home. But one evening, as he returned from work, the old temptation came over him, and his step lingered near the door of a public house. Lilly felt the inclination to pause in the slackened grasp of his hand, and endeavoured to draw him past. But in vain.

"You are not going in there, father," cried she, with a face of terror.

"Only a minute, dear. I am thirsty, but we won't stop."

"I cannot go there. Oh no, no, indeed I cannot," cried Lilly, struggling in his hand.

"Yes, you shall go in with me," said Willis angrily, dragging her on to the step, and pushing open the door.

Lilly ceased her resistance, and became instantly so passive, that her father looked down upon her face to read the cause; one piteous imploring expression of anguish met his gaze, her lip quivered, and her little frame trembled with agitation, as in a voice of touching plaintiveness she murmured with a rush of tears, "Poor Mary."

Willis started as if a musket had been fired past his ear; and retreating from the door, he strode home in utter forgetfulness of the little feet that were trying their best to keep up with his pace. Then he sank upon his knees, thanked God for deliverance, and prayed. "And never since that hour," said he, when narrating his little story to an interested listener, "have I set foot within those scenes of temptation and ruin; and by God's help, sir, I never will."

Doubtless the struggle between the new principle of Divine grace by which there is good reason to believe that Willis was now actuated, and long-indulged habit (aided by the ever-ingenuous excuses of his old nature, and the treacherous seductions of the enemy of souls), was long and terrible, and perhaps often recurred when least expected; but, as his believing wife had said, and as "poor Mary" had sometimes ventured to reiterate for his encouragement and her own, "True religion

does give victory over every thing," and to those who seek not only pardon of sin, but deliverance from temptation at the invigorating source of strength to resist it, and claim "grace to help in time of need," the promise is sure, "Sin *shall not* have dominion over them," they shall never struggle alone nor in vain; but their faithful God and Saviour, who begins his good work at the root of the matter, will complete it to their present peace and everlasting salvation. When the Holy Spirit, whose subjugating power no sinner ever sought in vain, undertakes the contest against corruption in the heart, temptation in the world, and the enemy who works by both, there is no habit too inveterate, no lust too strong, to maintain its ground either in the will or the conduct, against the influence of his persevering and conquering grace. What encouragement! what hope! Nothing is too hard for the Lord, nothing too difficult for our God; and it is ever his good pleasure to bestow, what the lost and helpless in conscious need come to him and ask for.

B. T.

LOSSES BY RELIGION.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."—1 Tim. iv. 8.

NEAR London there dwelt an old couple; in early life they had been poor; but God blessed their industry, and they were living in a comfortable retirement, when one day a stranger called on them to ask their subscription to a charity. The old lady had but little religious feeling, and still hankered after some of the sabbath earnings and easy shillings which Thomas had forfeited, from regard to the law of God; so when the visitor asked their contribution she interposed, and said, "Why, sir, we have lost a great deal by religion, since we first began; my husband knows that very well; have we not, Thomas?"

After a solemn pause, Thomas answered, "Yes, Mary, we have; before I got religion, Mary, I had an old slouched hat, a tattered coat, and mended shoes and stockings; but I have lost them long ago. And, Mary, you know that, poor as I was, I had a habit of getting drunk and quarrelling with you; and that, you know, I have lost. And then I had a burdened conscience, and a wicked heart, and ten thousand guilty fears; but all are lost, completely lost, and, like a millstone, cast into the deepest sea. And, Mary, you have been a loser too,

though not so great a loser as myself. Before we got religion, Mary, you had a washing-tray, in which you washed for hire ; but since then you have lost your washing-tray : and you had a gown and bonnet much the worse for wear, but you have lost them long ago : and you had many an aching heart concerning me at times ; but ~~these~~ you happily have lost ; and I could even wish that you had lost as much as I have lost ; for what we lose by religion will be an everlasting gain." The inventory of losses by religion runs thus:—A bad character—a guilty conscience—a troublesome temper—sundry evil habits—and a set of wicked companions. THE INVENTORY OF BLESSINGS GAINED BY RELIGION INCLUDES ALL THAT IS WORTH HAVING IN TIME AND ETERNITY. *Hamilton.*

"Happy is that people, that is in such a case : yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."—Psalm cxliv. 15.

COMING TO JESUS.

"DEAR Lord, look down from heaven on high,
Behold a sinner, doomed to die,
Trembling before thy throne.
Vengeance hangs o'er my guilty head,
Can Jesus' blood, for sinners shed,
For my dark sins atone?
I dare not hope.—Offended God,
Well I deserve thy chastening rod.

Oh, whither shall I flee?
I fear thy pardon now to crave."
"Sinner! I died thy soul to save,
Thy guilt was laid on me.
Though black thy sins, I all forgive;
Only believe, and thou shalt live.
My Spirit I'll bestow:
Thine heart shall be his loved abode."

"Jesus, my Saviour and my God,
How great the debt I owe!
Help thou mine unbelief, O Lord;
The riches of thy grace afford—
The fulness of thy love.
Oh, guide and guard me by thy hand,
And lead me to the promised land,
The sinless land above."

H. P.



THE EIGHT BELLS AND THEIR VOICES.

PART I.

NOT joyful voices, nor merry voices, but melancholy and sad are the voices of the Eight Bells. They have been heard for many years, but never have they discoursed sweet music; but rather the wails of wretchedness and woe. Let us recall some of these voices.

It was on a winter's evening, in Henry Ekworth's early childhood, that the first voice of the Eight Bells fell upon his ear. He was seated by a comfortable fireside at home, close to his mother's knee, when one entered the room with a tale of horror which thrilled through his young heart, though its full import was imperfectly comprehended then. It was a tale of death. An unhappy lady had that day been found lifeless in a neighbouring river, and report spoke of self-destruction.

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Henry had seen that lady, had heard her speak, had received trifling gifts from her hand. Terrible it was to him to think of that hand as cold in death—and such a death!

“The Eight Bells caused it!” said Henry’s gentle mother, as she broke out into sorrowful lamentations. “If it had not been for the Eight Bells, this might never have happened!”

Henry did not understand the connexion between the Eight Bells and the lady’s violent and sad death.

The next day the child walked by his mother’s side, and with her entered a house of mourning. He clung closer to her hand when the threshold was passed, for a painful scene was before them.

He saw a group of children, gathered round a small smouldering fire—a fire, it seemed, without heat. The little ones looked scared and awed; traces of tears were on their faces; but the first outburst of grief had ceased. One only, the eldest, sobbed as though her heart would break when Henry’s mother spoke kindly and compassionately to her, in subdued whispering. She was a fair and lovely girl, but thin and sorrow-worn. Henry’s mother had a basket in her hand, and from it she took food, and offered it to the children; and, oh, how eagerly they clutched it! “How hungry they must be!” thought the wondering child.

The unhappy children were thinly clad, and the room bore the look of abject poverty. The uncarpeted floor, the worn-out rushes of the chairs, the small and cracked looking-glass hung against the wall—if it had not been cracked it would not have been there—everything spoke of destitution.

As Henry’s mother spoke comforting words to the poor children, an inner door slowly opened, and a woman mysteriously beckoned to the visitor, who, rising to the summons, would have left her boy behind, but that he clung still closer to her—terrified, he knew not why.

After a moment’s thought, the mother moved slowly on, gently leading her boy. They ascended to an upper room, and there, on a bed, lay the lifeless body of the drowned lady, clothed in its coffin dress. Oh, how sharp and pinched the features! how deep and hollow the eyes! how thin and sharp the lips! Henry looked into his mother’s face; she was weeping bitterly; and the boy, wondering what it all could mean, wept too.

They retired from the chamber silently; and when they re-entered the room below, a man was there in a soiled and rusty coat. He was dirty and unshaven, and his watery eyes glared

restlessly on all around him. He was seated by the fire, with his hands on his knees ; and his children—for he was the father of the children there—had dispersed themselves hither and thither. Henry looked at the unhappy man, and dimly recognised in him a gentleman whom he had sometimes met when he was walking with his mother ; but surely it could not be the same !

Yes, the same gentleman, for his mother spoke to him by name ; and Henry remembered the name ; and it was the name of the lady, too, who now lay pale and dead in the room above. The man groaned deeply when Henry's mother spoke, and tears fell fast down his cheeks ; but he answered not a word.

Oh, how glad the child was to escape from that wretched dwelling !

They passed, on their way homeward, a house in the street, in front of which was suspended a large sign-board, gaily painted. Henry looked up at the sign, and his mother looked up too, and sighed deeply. It was the sign of the EIGHT BELLS. There were sounds of laughter and music within, as they hurried by its open door ; and Henry wondered what his mother had meant last evening when she said, " If it had not been for the Eight Bells this night never have happened ! " What had the Eight Bells to do with the poor lady's fearful death ?

That evening Henry's father called him to his side, and pointing to a passage in the Bible which lay open before him, he said, " Read, my son." And Henry read, " Who hath woe ? who hath sorrow ? who hath contentions ? who hath babbling ? who hath wounds without cause ? who hath redness of eyes ? They that tarry long at the wine ; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

Henry's father then guided his son's eye to another passage on the same page, and the boy read, " Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among wine bibbers ; among riotous eaters of flesh : for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty."

Henry's father then turned over the pages of the Bible till he came to a part of the New Testament ; and once more he pointed to a verse, and Henry went on reading : " Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor *drunkards*, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

The father took the child on his knee, and said, " The man

whom you saw to day in that sorrowful house, is a drunkard. He was once a happy man, and the lady whom you saw lying dead, was his loving wife, and the mother of those poor hungry children. Then they had a comfortable home, and everything pleasant about them; but the man began to tarry long at the wine: he became a drunkard: and by this he has brought himself to poverty and shame, his children to hunger and cold and grief, and the poor unhappy mother to death. He is a drunkard, my dear boy; and except God should bring him to repentance, he cannot, when he dies, inherit the kingdom of God: for God's word says that he cannot. There is no room for drunkards in heaven. Let us pray that God will forgive that unhappy man; and that you my dear boy, may always be kept by God's grace, from being a drunkard."

Henry heard in after years the history of that miserable man; how he had sunk from a favourable position in society by becoming a sot; had become a daily visitor at the Eight Bells, first at evening, and then in broad daylight also; had forfeited a lucrative situation, had sold his furniture and his garments, and, at length, even his wife's and his children's, to satisfy his appetites, till, driven to insanity by ill-usage and destitution and despair, the poor lady had committed self-destruction.

This was the first voice of the Eight Bells; and Henry never forgot its awful warning tone.

A few years passed away, and the boy heard a second voice, which seemed an echo of that which he had heard as a child.

It was on a bright summer's day, as Henry returned from school, that he met a crowd in the street, slowly moving onward, while from open doors and windows gazed men and women as it passed. And one said to another, "This is what is got by going to the Eight Bells."

Henry looked on, and as the crowd partially opened, he saw a young man, pale, and agitated with fear or remorse, led on—and he staggered as he went—by other men, whom he knew to be the peace officers of the town. Henry felt a cold chill creep over him as he saw marks of blood on the garments of the prisoner, and was told that he had grievously and treacherously wounded a man in a fierce drunken quarrel, at the Eight Bells.

Henry passed on; and the next day, it was told that the wounded man was dead, and the manslayer was in prison. The tragical deed had been wrought under the excitement of intoxication. There was a trifling dispute; thence had arisen

taunting words, then a blow was struck, and then a stab with a knife was returned. The wives and children of the slayer and the slain were plunged at once into the deepest woe. The men had, until the fatal quarrel, been close companions and friends.

The slain man was buried, and, a few weeks later, the man-slayer had received sentence of transportation; and when Henry heard this, the words once more came into his mind which he had first read as a child, "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? Look not upon the wine when it is red;—at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." And as he thought of these warnings, he prayed in his soul, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil."

Other years passed away, and a third voice sounded in the ears of the youth, like those which he had heard as a boy and a child; it told of shame and guilt, and a prison's walls.

A prison for debtors. Henry went there as a visitor, and in company with a messenger of mercy.

Long before, in the days of his boyhood, Henry had one playfellow whom, above all others, he loved. Frank, open-hearted, and affectionate was Albert; and no wonder that Henry loved him. Albert's father was in business, and he was deemed to be a prosperous man; but there had been one drawback to his prosperity—a worm in the bud; and, at length, after many years of downward progress, his business was closed, his family scattered, and himself an imprisoned debtor.

The prisoner was moodily pacing the narrow yard of the debtors' court, over the high-spiked walls of which gleamed some doubtful rays of autumnal sunshine, when Henry and his father approached him. Henry drew back while his father spoke to the ruined man, and did not seek to know the subject of their conference; but he perceived that tears glistened in the prisoner's eyes, which told of thankfulness, and it might be also of expressed contrition.

"Ah, Mr. Henry," said the imprisoned debtor, when the conference was ended, and he held out his trembling hand to the youth as he spoke, "your father is noble and generous. I shall never forget his kindness, though I shall never have it in my power to return it. And Mr. Henry," he added, in a low, agitated tone, "look at me now, and think of what you knew me to be in appearance and character once, and take warning;

it is the Eight Bells—ah, you know what I mean, I see—it is the Eight Bells that brought me to be what I am.” And saying this, the unhappy man wrung the hand of his young visitor, and then turning away, he wept.

It was not many months after this that Henry accompanied his father to London; and as they passed through one of the streets Mr. Ekworth’s eye fell upon a countenance with which, as it seemed, he had once been familiar; for he suddenly stopped, and spoke to the man by name. The man was ragged and filthy: long straggling grey hair hung over his haggard face: his eyes were red, his lips purple; and a bright red spot on his cheek, while it contrasted with the death-like pallor of his forehead, told of disease. His voice was broken by a short and continued cough, and his hand trembled as he leaned it for support against the buttress of a wall, as he stood.

“You seem ill, Hallet,” said Mr. Ekworth, compassionately, after he had expressed surprise at the unexpected meeting.

“Yes, sir, I am ill,” said the ragged man.

“Have you been ill long?” inquired Henry’s father.

“A long while, off and on, sir,” said the man; “I have not been able to work more than a day or so at a time, for a good many weeks, or you would not see me as I am now, sir,” he added, looking down with confusion on his tattered garb.

“You are in distress, I am afraid, Hallet,” said Mr. Ekworth.

“Indeed I am, sir,” said the poor man, with a deep-drawn sigh. “I am indeed.”

“And yet,” rejoined Mr. Ekworth, slowly and sadly, “you have not forsaken your old destructive habit. Your breath betrays you. And I fear you are going on in the Eight Bells fashion, bringing ruin on your body and soul.”

“It was only a drop, sir,” said the man, hastily interrupting his monitor, and speaking deprecatingly; “if you will believe me, sir, it was only a drop that I had just now, to keep me from sinking in the street. I was so faint, sir; and it was the last penny I had got. Ah, sir,” he went on; “I cannot do as I used to do, if I wished it ever so much. I haven’t the money and I haven’t the strength.”

“I see you have not, my poor friend,” said Mr. Ekworth, sorrowfully: “and you are finding by terrible experience, ‘the end of these things is death.’”

The man did not reply in words; the muscles of his countenance moved convulsively.

"Oh, Hallet," Mr. Ekworth continued; "if I could but hope that you had seen the sinfulness of your past course, as you must have felt its wretchedness."

"I know its sinfulness, and I feel its wretchedness, sir," said the convicted man, in a tone of self-abandonment, as he looked down upon the pavement; "and I see you have got the measure of me, Mr. Ekworth, just as you used to have; but where is the use of talking? I am like them that said, — 'There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.'"

"Alas! and you can quote Scripture thus to your own condemnation! But, my poor friend, far gone as you are in misery and sin, there is one who can subdue your iniquities, and who says, 'Return unto me, and I will return unto you.' Think of Him, Hallet; and go to Him, even now, at the eleventh hour."

The poor man shook his head despondingly and helplessly, and tears ran down his cheeks.

"I dare not relieve you now and here," said Mr. Ekworth, after a moment's painful hesitation; "for if you should promise not to misuse the gift, I could not trust to your strength of mind to resist temptation. But is your wife living?"

"She is, poor thing, she is," said the wretched man.

"Tell me where you live, then, Hallet."

"It is not a fit place for you to go to, sir, it is not indeed," said Hallet, eagerly.

"I am sorry for it, for it is only through *her* that I can assist you."

The man's eager countenance fell. "I will tell you where we live, then, sir," said he, reluctantly; "but you will find what I say is true; it is not a fit place for a human creature to live in."

"I will call on you and your wife this afternoon," said Mr. Ekworth, when he had obtained the information he sought. "Stay; you say you have expended your last penny, and it may be you are hungry; or if you are not, your wife may be. Will you carry home a loaf?"

"Oh yes, if you will trust me with it, sir," said Hallet, earnestly; and the loaf having been obtained at a baker's shop close by, the poor, wretched man hastened away, and Mr. Ekworth and his son went on.

"You do not remember that man, Henry," said Mr. Ekworth, after a short silence. "He lived in our town when you were a child. He was a thriving mechanic then. Poor Hallet!"

"The old story, I am afraid," said Henry—"the Eight Bells."

* "Yes, my dear boy; this is another voice from the Eight Bells."

"Hallet!" repeated Henry to himself; "I think I must have heard the name."

"You have heard it no doubt, Henry. Poor Hallet used to work for us; he was a carpenter, and, as I have said, a prosperous man till he became a sot. He was a professor of religion, too, and a Sunday-school teacher. You may judge what he is now, for you heard what he said. Poor Hallet! he came to London, as he said, to better his circumstances; but I fear it was that he might sin with less restraint. His character was already gone, and he had apostatized. Poor Hallet!" Mr. Ekworth repeated with a sigh. G. E. S.

A CURE FOR THE HEART-ACHE.

You tell me that English friends have been entertained by my "Bit of Bacon,"* and desire other anecdotes of the peasantry of our green isle, and of the popular superstitions still existing among them. I have pleasure in now giving you an account of some occurrences which illustrate the vestiges that may yet be found here of ancient popular belief in fairy lore, and the more so, as in the instance I am about to relate, that belief is connected with the religious enlightenment of those who held it.

Of all superstitions the medical linger longest, probably because the incentive to them is an abiding one in the diseases, real or imaginary, which continue to afflict mankind. As many of the complaints to which the Irish peasantry are subject, are attributed to the malevolent influence of fairies, the fairy doctor is, on such occasions, preferred to regular practitioners.

I had not been long settled on my ancestral property when a female, who resided in a lonely and thickly wooded glen about two miles from my house, awakened my commiseration by her appearance of ill-health; her countenance, naturally not unpleasing, had a listless and even melancholy look, though it was occasionally lighted up with an expression which proved its owner to be possessed of even more than the usual intelligence for which her country-people are remarkable. She was still a young woman, but her step had lost the elasti-

* See Number for July.

city of youth, and it was plain that from some ailment, whether physical or mental, she was in a declining state.

One bright morning which succeeded a night of heavy rain—a common occurrence in the mountainous regions—I took my fishing-rod and basket, and set out for the valley where Kathleen O'Guira lived, remembering the poet's hint,

“Now is the time,
While yet the dark brown water aids the guile,
To tempt the trout.”

I knew that the stream which ran down this glen, usually sparkling as clear as crystal over its pebbly bed, would now be rather turbid, and while resolved to make an attack upon its speckled inmates, I thought it would be a good opportunity of finding out some particulars of the invalid, for the purpose of offering to procure medical aid for her, or anything else in my power which might be of use for her relief.

Having had some success in my angling, I ascended the steep narrow path which led up the hill-side to Kathleen's cottage. Its situation was worthy of a better edifice than met my sight when I reached it. It was a cabin of the poorest description, but commanded a view of the whole valley, the trees of which now wore the varied tints of autumn. The brook that rippled through the glen sent up, what a native poet calls,

“The language of the waters,
That low monotonous murmur of sweet sound,”

and I paused to look and to listen. My musings on the pleasant scene were, however, cut short by the voice of lamentation issuing from the cottage. I entered, and found that it proceeded from the lips of an old woman, Kathleen's mother, who was stooping over the hearth, arranging a griddle on the embers. She did not perceive me, and continued her mournful soliloquy in her native language. “‘Tis a great spite you owe me; Fin Varrah,” she said, “not to be satisfied with driving my boy, the light of my eyes, and the joy of my heart, far over the seas from his home and his people; but now the only one I have left, my Kathleen, whose cheek was redder than the wild roses on the hedge—now she is pining away under your power and—” she heard my tread, started up, and exclaimed in English, “The master! sure your honour is welcome, and proud I am to see you in my poor cabin.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Guira,” I replied; “I came to enquire about your daughter's health, and to give her a few trout just caught,” offering the contents of my basket; “is she here?”

"No, sir, she went to a neighbour's house early this morning, and will soon come back."

I then asked about her health, and was told that it was slowly declining, her complaint being, as her mother expressed it, something pressing on the heart; but whether this was to be literally taken, and applied to bodily suffering or to mental, I could not discover. There was evidently an unwillingness to give information on the subject, but by means of a sort of cross-examination I found out that the mother had taken Kate to two or three physicians, and their remedies not curing the patient at once, she had got a friar to read prayers over her. This being equally ineffectual, both medical and ecclesiastical advisers were dismissed. Some others had been consulted then, as I could just infer from hints, but who it was there was no finding out. Just then Kathleen herself entered the cabin. She looked fatigued, and had a vessel in her hand in which was some oaten meal. On perceiving me, she dropped her best courtesy, but, to my surprise, gave no answer to the inquiries I made concerning her health, and, with some confusion, looked at her mother, as if desiring her to explain the cause.

"She cannot speak, your honour," said the old woman.

"Poor thing! Has she lost the power of speech?" I asked.

"Oh no, sir, but she was with the doctor now, and she must not speak till she has taken the cure. Don't be cast down, Kathleen dear, you will soon be well-again; and go on as the doctor told you; I have everything ready, and sure the master will excuse you, where it is so great a matter that there should be no delay."

I requested she would not heed my presence, and resolved to watch their proceedings, having guessed that these poor deluded people had applied to some charm-worker for a cure, and were about to practise the mystic rites he recommended. Kathleen shook her head mournfully at her mother's promise of speedy restoration, but proceeded to obey her injunctions.

She laid the meal on a table where salt, milk, and a roller had been prepared, and, still without speaking, made it into three little cakes which she laid upon the griddle and baked. During this process I gathered the particulars of the "meal cure" from the mother, who had become more communicative, particularly when I told her that I had overheard her words, as I came in, and requested to know who the person she called Fin Vafrah was, whom she accused of having injured both her children. The information I gathered was as follows:

Fin Varrach is supposed to be the king of the fairies, or good people, as, more from fear than love, the Irish call them. This malevolent sprite had been offended with Mrs. Guira, in her younger days, by the neglect of some ceremony at Beltaine, or May-day, when various rites, originating in the pagan worship of the god Bel, were wont to be performed. The omission, as the poor woman believed, was never pardoned, and to the influence of the fairy she attributed losses in cattle and corn, which had reduced her from a state of comparative comfort to her present poverty. Her only son had then become the object of wrath to her unseen enemies. Nothing less than supernatural power, she said, could have changed him from being the finest, merriest boy in the country, to the thoughtful, silent person he had become; saying such things as made her blood run cold to think of. This part of Mrs. Guira's story she hurried over with evident reluctance to speak of it, and I just learned that these terrible things, whatever they were, had caused the priests to order him either to recant them or leave the country, and that he had chosen the latter alternative.

From the time of her brother's departure, Kathleen had pined away, but her mother was sure that she would be restored by the means now resorted to, which were as follows. The fairy doctor's first-rate remedy is the "meal cure," of which he uses various modifications for various diseases. In Kathleen's case he filled a small vessel with oaten meal, and muttered over it an Irish incantation. He then covered it, and applied it to her heart, the part said to be affected, repeating the same words. Some of the meal is said to disappear from the vessel during this process, and when uncovered looks as if it had been cut down from above. That which remains the patient takes home, makes into cakes, and bakes, as Kathleen was now doing. She was charged not to speak until this was done, and not to allow cat or dog or any living thing to pass between her and her cakes until they were baked and eaten with three sprigs of watereresses.

While she was performing all this, I mused upon what her mother had communicated, and from her brief account of priestly interference, came to the conclusion that the son's delinquencies, and probably the daughter's depression of spirits, were connected with religious convictions. I lifted up my heart in secret to the Hearer of prayer, that he would be pleased to rescue these poor people from the pagan darkness in which they were immured.

"That's right, darling," said Mrs. Guira to Kathleen, when she had finished her cakes and cresses, "and do you know what I have for your dinner? Trout that the master caught with his own hand, long life to him."

The Irish heart is peculiarly susceptible of kindness; and Kate seemed so much impressed by what she considered not only kind but condescending, that she forgot the awe in which she seemed to have stood of me, and thanked "my honour" for my goodness, with much warmth.

"Kathleen," I replied, "it would give me great pleasure to be of service to you, but these little fishes can only refresh your body, they cannot relieve your mind, or heart, where, if I do not mistake, your ailment lies: neither, believe me, can these charms that you are using."

"I know that, sir; it was to please mother that I tried them."

"Well! I thank God, I am acquainted with a cure for every ache that the heart can feel. It must be a true one, for it was provided by Him who died upon the cross to save us, even the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is effected by eating bread, but not like that you have now taken—not of man's but of God's supplying."

"Oh, sir, what is it?"

"I will read it for you in his own words." I took an Irish Testament from my pocket, and read the 47th and four following verses of the 6th chapter of John's Gospel, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life," etc.

Kate's eyes sparkled and her colour rose to crimson, as she listened. "That's it! she exclaimed, "that's it! Dennis' book, and no other!" She stopped with a look of alarm, as if she had betrayed more than she intended.

"It is God's book," I said, "and tells the only way by which sinners can be saved." She still was silent, holding down her head as if quailing before her mother's inquiring gaze. "Kathleen," I continued, "if you know anything of this book, this blessed book, do not conceal it. Hear what the Lord Jesus has said, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'"

She burst into tears. "I will tell everything," she cried; "I would have told it long ago, only not to vex my poor mother."

* Mark viii. 38.

Her simple recital followed, interrupted frequently by her sobs, and by the old woman's exclamations of wonder and sorrow more than of anger. Its substance was this :

Dennis Guira, Kate's brother, had a desire for acquiring knowledge which the little he had gained at a hedge school could not gratify. When an Irish teacher commenced a school to teach the neighbours to read in their native language, and carried it on privately at night, for fear of the priest, Dennis attended it, making such progress that by the time it was broken up under priestly influence, he was a good Irish scholar. The only book he possessed in the vernacular tongue was the Bible, and this he studied whenever he could. It was beautiful to hear his sister tell of the effect produced thereby upon his mind through the Holy Spirit's power. He soon believed the blessed tidings of the gospel, and found joy and peace in believing. The result you are acquainted with.

Kathleen had been his confidant, and he had constantly read the word for her. Her mind had been awakened to a deep conviction of sin, but had not received those truths in which alone comfort may be found, and her thought day and night was, "What must I do to be saved?" This secret uneasiness was the cause of the depression and declining health, which her friends attributed to the malignity of the "good people." Although Kate, to please her mother, tried every cure that was recommended, she said she always felt sure that the remedy for her heart-ache was to be found in Dennis's book, and there only. The truth of this belief, I rejoice to say, she soon experienced. I offered to come to Mrs. Guira's cabin thrice a week, until the arrival of two Irish readers, whom I was about procuring for the district, to read the word of God in the native language for Kate, and any one else who wished to hear it. The young woman gladly accepted the offer, and notwithstanding the old one's prejudice and fear, she did not oppose it. There are still the remains of feudal feelings among the peasantry, which lead them to look up to the landlord, or master, as a chief who is to be venerated and obeyed, and when fostered by kindness on his part, it is often powerful enough to make them resist the priestly thralldom in which they are bound. It was so on this occasion, and our meetings at the cottage in the wood were, by degrees, well attended; and that they were followed by good effects, will, I trust, appear in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. As for Kathleen, she was no longer heard to

city, 'Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?'"* she had come to Jesus with her heart-ache, and was made whole.

E. F. G.

FAITH EVERYTHING.

AMONG a large number of young people, who, at one time, were in the habit of meeting me every week, for the purpose of personal conversation on the subject of religion; there was a very quiet, contemplative young woman, whose candour and simplicity of heart interested me. She did not appear to me to be susceptible of much impulsive emotion, but to be very thoughtful. Her convictions of sin, which seemed to be deep and clear, were uniformly expressed, more in the language of reason, than of emotion; so that I sometimes feared, that she had only an ordinary and intellectual conviction, without much real discovery of her character, as a sinner against God. In addition to all the conversation I could have with her in the presence of others, I often visited her at her own home. And because of her apparent destitution of any deep feelings, and my consequent fear that her convictions were more speculative than real, I laboured to unfold to her the character of God, his law, the nature of sin, and the state of her own heart; and aimed to impress truths of this kind upon her feelings and conscience. She assented to it all.

I urged upon her, the necessity of immediate repentance, her lost condition as a sinner, and her indispensable need of the atoning blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, to save her from merited condemnation. She assented to all this. I explained to her, again and again, the whole way of salvation for sinners, the grace of God, and the willingness of Christ to save her. *She said she believed it all. I cautioned her against resisting the Holy Spirit, by unbelief, by prayerlessness, by delaying her repentance and her fleeing to Christ; and in every mode that my thoughts could devise, I tried to lead her to the gospel salvation. But it all seemed to be ineffectual. She remained apparently in the same state of mind. Thus she continued for several weeks. She gained nothing, and lost nothing. Studious of her Bible, prayerful, attentive to all the means of grace, she was still without peace, and still manifested no additional anxiety, and no disposition to discontinue her attempts to attain salvation. For a time, there had been with her manifestly an increasing solemnity and depth of

* Jer. viii. 22.

seriousness ; but this time had gone by ; and she remained to all appearance, fixed in the same unchanging state of mind.

Such was her condition, when I visited her again, without much expectation of any good to result from anything I could say. After many inquiries, and trying all my skill to ascertain, if possible, whether there was any vital religious truth which she did not understand, or any sin which she was not willing to abandon, I said to her plainly : " Mary, I can do you no good ! I have said to you everything appropriate to your state, that I can think of. I would aid you most willingly, if I could ; but I can do you no good."

" I do not think you can," said she, calmly ; " but I hope you will still come to see me."

" Yes, I will," said I. " But all I can say to you is I know there is salvation for you ; but you must repent, you must flee to Christ."

We went from her house directly to the evening lecture. I commenced the service, by reading the hymn of Dr. Watts :—

" There is a voice of sovereign grace
Sounds from the sacred word ;

' Ho ! ye despairing sinners, come,
And trust upon the Lord.'

" My soul obeys the almighty call,
And runs to this relief ;
I would believe thy promise, Lord,
Oh ! help my unbelief.

" To the dear fountain of thy blood,
Incarnate God, I fly ;
Here let me wash my spotted soul
From crimes of deepest die.

" Stretch out thine arm, victorious King,
My reigning sins subdue ;
Drive the old dragon from his seat,
With all his hellish crew.

" A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall ;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all !"

This hymn was sung, and the service conducted in the usual manner. I forgot all about Mary as an individual, and preached, as appropriately as I was able, to the congregation before me.

The next day she came to tell me, that she " had made a new discovery."

" Well," said I, " what is it that you have discovered ?"

"Why, sir," said she, "the way of salvation all seems to me now perfectly plain. My darkness is all gone. I see now what I never saw before."

"Do you see that you have given up sin and the world, and given your whole heart to Christ?"

"I do not think that I am a Christian; but I have never been so happy before. All is light to me now. I see my way clear; and I am not burdened and troubled as I was."

"And how is this? What has brought you to this state of mind?"

"I do not know how it is, or what has brought me to it. But when you were reading that hymn last night, I saw the whole way of salvation for sinners perfectly plain, and wondered that I had never seen it before. I saw that I had nothing to do, but to trust in Christ:—

‘A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall.’

I sat all the evening, just looking at that hymn. I did not hear your prayer. I did not hear a word of your sermon. I do not know your text. I thought of nothing but that hymn; and I have been thinking of it ever since. It is so light, and makes me so contented. Why, sir," said she, in the perfect simplicity of her heart, never thinking that she was repeating what had been told her a thousand times, "don't you think that the reason why we do not get out of darkness sooner, is, that we don't believe?"

"Just that, Mary, precisely that. Faith in Jesus Christ to save is the way to heaven."

The idea had not yet occurred to her mind, that she was a Christian. She had only discovered the way. I thought it wiser not to suggest the idea to her at all, but to leave her to the direction of the Holy Spirit and the truth expressed in the hymn. If the Holy Spirit had given her a new heart, I trusted he would lead her in due time to hope. The hymn which had opened her eyes, was the best truth for her to meditate on at present.

I conversed with her for some time. She had no more troubles, no darkness, no difficulties. All was clear to her mind, and she rejoiced in the unexpected discovery she had made. "I now know what to do," said she; "I must trust in Jesus Christ; and I believe God will enable me to do so."

It was not till after the lapse of some days, that she began to hope that she had really become reconciled to God. But

she finally came to the conclusion, that her religion commenced when she sat, that evening, pondering that hymn, and wondering she "had never discovered before, that sinners must believe."

She afterwards became a communicant in the church; and to the day of her death, so far as I have been able to ascertain, she lived as a believer.

This case has suggested to my mind the inquiry, whether, as ministers, after all our preaching upon faith, we do not fail to insist directly upon it as we ought, and tell inquirers, as Mary told me, "We have nothing to do but to trust." I deem it not improbable, that by the extensive and laboured explanations we give, the minds of inquirers are often confused; and the very way we take to make religion plain, is the very means of making it obscure; and that Mary's simplicity of faith would be a far better sermon for many such persons. All the matter of a soul's closing with Christ may be wrapped up in a very little space—may be a very simple thing. And what that thing is, the Holy Spirit seems to have taught Mary, "We have nothing to do but to trust."—*Pastor's Sketches.*

THE ROSE AND THE THORN.

"How well it will look!" said Alfred B—to himself, as he hastened home to explain to his father what he deemed an advantageous offer to commence business at once as junior partner with a young man who had capital, but acknowledged himself disinclined to much work. "W—and B—, a handsome brass plate, a snug office, and one's own master! Nothing could be better. What a lucky fellow I am! Of course, my father cannot object." But it was not "of course" that his father would see the matter as it presented itself to the ardent imagination of youth, and as Mr. B—took his son's arm and walked up and down the garden, listening attentively to the scheme, it was evident that his sympathies were not enlisted in its behalf.

"I think I have explained all, father," said Alfred, as he concluded with a flourish of admiration at the generosity of the offer. "You will not have to advance a farthing on my account, but merely to guarantee a sort of security for my integrity and honour."

"And who guarantees for Mr. W—'s integrity and honour?" asked Mr. B—.

"Oh, you know the capital is his. I can lose nothing even if we should be unsuccessful."

"Yes, you might lose time, character, and credit, Alfred, for in those particulars your investments will be equal, and your responsibilities the same. I should prefer to see you a salaried servant to a respectable firm rather than a partner in a dashing speculation. I know the family and the training of this young man, and, though he may possibly prove superior to both, yet the probability is that the seed will produce its fruit, and the kind will not be that in which my son should sympathize and intermeddle."

"But, father, what other than the most disinterested feeling could prompt such a proposal to me?"

"A prudent estimate of the value of the principles in which you have been educated, my son. Industry, perseverance, and truthfulness, are appreciated by the world, from whatever soil they spring, and are more to their possessor, in the long run, than thousands of gold and silver. It is apparent that you are considered trustworthy. Be careful in whose service you enlist a talent for which you are responsible to the God who gave it. He would not bid you balance it against indolence, carelessness, and extravagance, to say nothing of other deficiencies in your proposed partner."

"But I am to be the chief manager, you know, father; it will be in my power to check the intrusion of those unfortunate qualities into the arrangements of business."

"I think not, the more so because you will be considered the obliged party. But if, as I trust, you desire to carry into the business of the world the principles of practical religion, let not the first step be a false one; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and the utmost forbearance and charity cannot admit that Mr. W— lives at present to discharge the duties of his station with respect to God's appointments, but simply to please and enjoy himself. I cannot place you in business myself, but if, making all proper inquiries and efforts, we wait patiently on God; depend on it, he will make the opportunity, and show us how to use it."

"I almost thought that this seemed the exact thing for me," said Alfred, in a tone of disappointment.

"You had not sufficiently considered it, my dear boy; and I often think that when partnerships in business are entered into with haste and carelessness, and without a due regard to the characters and habits of the individuals concerned, disaster and disappointment may be expected as the legitimate results.

For example, you, Alfred, have often agreed that you will not go into business merely to make money, but to honour God, and carry out his holy rules in the duties his providence assigns you."

"Yes, certainly, father, I do not swerve from that desire now."

"But you would find it impossible to follow it with a man whose views and feelings are bounded by the present, and who recognises no authority beyond necessity or expedience. The consciousness of obligation would tempt you to compromise, and compromise would immediately render you contemptible, not only in your own eyes, but in those of your partner; and inconsistency in comparative trifles has usually commenced the downward course, I do not say of temporal prosperity, but of all that was promising and happy in character and experience; in comparison with which the accumulation of a princely fortune is no more than the dust beneath your feet."

"I promised to call and mention to Mr. W— your view of the subject," said Alfred, after a pause; "what shall I say?"

"Kindly and courteously state that your father objects to partnerships, excepting under peculiar circumstances, and wishes you to decline a position to which your youth and inexperience are wholly inadequate."

"I am afraid that will not content him," said Alfred, doubtfully, "because he combatted those objections when I urged them myself."

"If your own judgment does not coincide with what I have said, Alfred, you can give no better reason than that of my prohibition. If otherwise, you will be able to give a Christian answer to any man who asks a reason for Christian conduct. This is one of the snares by which you are tempted to diverge from the straight and narrow way, my dear son; and it is already causing you for the moment to feel impatient of parental authority. Would you rather that I should now leave you at liberty to act as you think proper?"

"You may safely do so, dear father," said Alfred; "for I shall think it proper to submit to your judgment. I have not tried it for so many years, to disregard it in the first step of an independent career."

"God will bless you and direct your way," said his father, with gratified affection.

"I suppose I may have this to comfort me in my disappointment," said Alfred, stretching forth his hand to pluck a rose bud from a favourite tree as he passed.

* "I think this is prettier," said his father; "you can see its form and colour better developed."

But Alfred had seized the stem and violently broken off the flower, his fingers coming into sudden contact with two or three large thorns; on which, with an exclamation of pain, he dropped the bud, to tend the wounds his own impetuosity had caused.

"Why did you not wait a moment?" said Mr. B—; "I was just cutting a prettier one with my pruning scissors."

"I wish I had!" exclaimed Alfred, "but I forgot the thorns."

"Ah, that is too often the case in matters of more importance; we see the flowers in the light of our own wills and wishes, and, in hastening to gratify them, too often feel only the thorns? Come, let me help to dislodge these little tormentors, and be thankful that they are only in your fingers, for of all the pricks that can be inflicted those of self reproach in the conscience are the most intolerable, and the hardest to be borne.

Mr. W—, highly indignant at the rejection of his offer, soon found a gentleman more alive to its advantages, with whom he entered into an engagement, and carried on a prosperous and speculative business for the space of about three years, when suddenly his favourite maxim, "Nothing venture, nothing have" was carried out more extensively than met the approbation of his partner, and a complete failure was the consequence. Mr. W— fled the country, leaving the weight of the mischief to fall on the head of his unfortunate and angry partner, who protested that he had lost time, and character, and credit by the connexion, and was in worse plight after three years' toil and trouble than when first attracted by the terms of the proposal.

Alfred B— took a situation, and waited patiently. It was just at the period of Mr. W—'s failure that the manager of the business in which Alfred was employed retired in failing health, warmly recommending the young clerk to the notice of the principal. In time, industry and integrity reaped a noble reward, and Alfred found himself in a position to minister to the comfort of those valued parents who had trained his youth in paths of truth and peace, and, under God's blessing, laid the foundation of his present and everlasting prosperity. He enjoyed the roses of life the more, because he had waited to receive them from his heavenly Father's hand, instead of snatching them in his own time and way, to be pricked by their hidden thorns.

B. T.

HOME REVIEWS.

MILTON.

"I AM about to recommend a poem to your attention to day, my children, which you must have often heard spoken of, and always in terms of the highest commendation. It is, indeed, by some pronounced to be the noblest treasury of poetry in the world, even making due deduction for the faults which, like every human composition, it possesses."

"I am glad it is a poem, papa," said Anna; "please tell us its title."

"I fear you will be disappointed when you hear it," her father answered; "it has not the advantage of novelty to recommend it to your notice. You have all had frequent opportunities of reading it, but, I believe, never did so. It is 'MILTON'S PARADISE LOST.'"

"I have often intended to read it, and even commenced once or twice, for I knew how highly it was thought of," said Emma.

"And will you tell me what hindered your proceeding; or shall I tell you a probable cause, my dear? It was this, perhaps. The style of poetry thought most of in the present day, especially by lady readers, has caused such a liking for inflated metaphor, and high-sounding phrases, that the simple sublimity of real excellence in the delightful art can hardly be relished. The style I have referred to is suited to common-place minds; but even taste of a superior order becomes vitiated by the habit of reading the productions that are written in it. I would endeavour to preserve you from such a result by putting the best poetry into your hands when you can spare time from your studies for such a recreation."

"Is not 'Paradise Lost' a very long poem, father?" asked Richard.

"Yes; but if you all appreciate its beauties as much as I expect, you will think that circumstance an advantage. As you are not accustomed to long poems or to blank verse, probably some little effort may at first be necessary for your progress in Milton's writings; but I venture to predict that you will soon be repaid, and will feel and enjoy the magical influence of his poetry."

"Was he not blind, papa?"

"He was; and it has been thought that the faculties of his mind grew more vigorous after he was deprived of sight; and that his imagination, naturally sublime, was, when ab-

stracted from material objects, more at liberty to make excursions into the unseen world, when, in composing, he was to range—

‘Beyond the visible diurnal sphere.’”

“We know, father,” said Richard, “that the subject of the poem, which we will gladly read at your desire, is the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise; but will you give us some idea of how he managed to make so much of that one circumstance?”

“His subject is more comprehensive than you suppose; but Milton has himself, in his *pröeme* or opening to ‘Paradise Lost,’ given with admirable skill a concise sketch of it:—

‘Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly muse.’

Now I need not remind you that the work performed by that ‘one greater Man’—the redemption of our sinful race from the ruin incurred by the fall—is a theme so great, and of such profound interest, as to employ the powers, not only of the first of uninspired bards, and of those royal poets who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,* but of thousands of angels who round about the throne of God say, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.’”†

“Indeed it is, papa,” observed Emma; “and I should like to know whether Milton, in speaking of it, appears to have held scriptural views concerning man’s justification by the sacrifice of the Saviour alone?”

“Quite so, my child; otherwise I should not have recommended the poem, however beautiful, to your attention. Indeed, were it otherwise it would not be beautiful to the Christian reader. But to prove Milton’s orthodox creed upon this important point, I will read you a few lines from an address supposed to be spoken by God the Father—

‘From the pure empyréan where he sits
High throned above all height,’

to ‘the radiant image of his glory,’ God the Son, who sat beside him communing, while the origin, the present, and the future of the human race was shadowed forth; their fall reviewed; and the great scheme of redemption through Divine love developed:—

‘ Those, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
 Their nature also to thy nature join,
 And be thyself Man among men on earth,
 Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,
 By wond’rous birth: be thou in Adam’s room,
 The head of all mankind, though Adam’s son.
 As in him perish all men, so in thee,
 As from a second root, shall be restored
 As many as are restored; without thee none.
 His crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit
 Imputed shall absolve them who renounce
 Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
 And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
 Receive new life.’

This fine address is too long for me to read the whole, but at its conclusion:—

‘ The multitude of angels, with a shout
 Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
 As from blest voices, uttering joy, heaven rung
 With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
 The eternal regions; lowly reverent,
 Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground,
 With solemn adoration, down they cast
 Their crowns inwove with amaranth and gold.’ ”

“ That is very beautiful,” said Anna; while Richard observed, “ I think, father, I have heard it objected to Milton that he makes Satan too noble and interesting a personage notwithstanding all his wickedness.”

“ It has been said,” Mr. Travers replied, “ but I think unjustly. He describes him as an ‘ archangel ruined,’ and such he is. To me it seems that the general habit of speaking of our great spiritual enemy with derision, and as the bugbear of the nursery, has an injurious effect upon the mind; leading us to forget the awful truth which the word of God reveals to put us on our guard, that Satan and his emissaries are actively and incessantly at work to try and lead us from all that is right. The impression left by Milton’s description of these majestic but most malevolent beings is far more calculated to remind us of the necessity there is for being watchful, than the usual way of referring to these unseen agents. It better enables us to realize their existence, and is, we can scarcely doubt, nearer the truth.”

“ In a critical point of view, papa, is Milton’s method of describing the fallen angels approved of?”

“ On that subject an eminent critic has made the following remarks:—‘ Of all poets who have introduced into their works the agency of supernatural beings, Milton has succeeded best.

Poetry which relates to the beings of another world ought to be at once mysterious and picturesque. That of Milton is so; his spirits are unlike those of almost all other writers. His fiends, in particular, are wonderful creations. They are not metaphysical abstractions. They are not wicked men. They are not ugly beasts. They have no horns, no tails, none of the fee-faw-fum of Tasso. They have just enough in common with human nature to be intelligible to human beings. Their characters are, like their forms, marked by a certain dim resemblance to those of men, but exaggerated to gigantic dimensions, and veiled in mysterious gloom.

"The visits of the holy angels to our first parents, those benevolent spirits who, we know, still minister to them that are heirs of salvation, is a more engaging subject, and one on which our poet is peculiarly happy. The last interview between the archangel Michael and Adam, wherein the heavenly messenger gives a narrative of the world's destinies, bringing them down to the coming of the Messiah, and filling his rapt listener with joy and wonder, is very beautiful. May a perusal of it awaken some such feeling in your minds as Adam is supposed to have experienced when made to exclaim—

"O Goodness infinite! Goodness immense!
That all this good, of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness.
Henceforth I learn: that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God, to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on him sole depend;
Taught this by His example, whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest."

"Has not Milton left another poem called 'Paradise Regained,' very inferior to that we are going to read, papa?"

"He has left a poem so called, Anna, and a very fine one it is; though, for some cause which I never could discover, it is seldom spoken of except as a failure. That Milton was mistaken in preferring it to 'Paradise Lost,' I must admit; but I do believe that its inferiority to that poem is not more decided than the inferiority of every poem which has since made its appearance, to 'Paradise Regained.'"

"I have read two short poems by Milton, the 'Allegro,' and the 'Penseroso,' and admired them exceedingly," said Emma.

"Of them, the critic I have already quoted has declared, that it is impossible to conceive the mechanism of language

being brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. And now, my children, I would remind you, that while I deem the reading of poetry—of course I mean such as is quite unobjectionable—an innocent method of relaxing the mind after severer studies; too much devotion to the divine art, as it is called, has an injurious tendency in many ways, as well as by leading to a breach of the precept which directs Christians to redeem the time. Poetry is said to be the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination—the art of doing by means of words, what the painter does by means of colours. Now while we may with impunity sometimes indulge our imaginations by yielding them up to the pleasant influence of such illusions, let us be very cautious in the use of these mental stimulants, lest they unfit our minds for the every day business of life.”

“Is there any rule by which we may judge how far we can safely indulge in this and similar recreations?” inquired Richard.

“There is, my son, in the word of God a simple but most comprehensive one, that will guide us under almost any circumstances in which we can be placed. ‘Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’* While conscience testifies that we are seeking refreshment for either our minds or bodies for the purpose of devoting their powers with renewed energy to Him ‘whose we are and whom we serve,’ the indulgence is a safe one, and not likely to encroach upon the performance of our duty. Let us then, my children, endeavour to keep this divine precept ever in mind, and may God give us grace to apply it faithfully upon every occasion.” G.

VISITS TO THE SICK.

FROM THE LIFE OF ANNA MARIA CLARKE.

In former days there lived on Livermead sands, near Torquay, in Devonshire, an old couple, called Thomas and Mary Lewis. He was a fisherman, and they had one daughter whom they called Mary. These persons were all singularly ignorant, scarcely knowing anything, even in words, of the God who made them, and still less of Him who died to redeem them. The daughter went out to service, and fell into great sin. Her health failed when she was still young, and she returned to her parents in a dying state. Her mother attended to all the wants of her body with much natural kindness, but thought

* 1 Cor. viii. 31.

nothing of the immortal inhabitant which lay dead in trespasses and sins. This was their state in the year 1814, when it pleased the God of providence and grace to direct the steps of Anna M— as a visitor to their cottage. She used, in her daily walks, to search out for objects of interest among the poor, and discovering this sick girl, whom no one visited, she considered her a peculiar call upon her exertions. She found her in a state of the most lamentable darkness, very fretful under her sufferings, and cross with her mother, in spite of her assiduous attentions to alleviate her trial, keeping her particularly clean and comfortable, and sparing no pains, night or day, to serve her.

Anna was not aware of the sins of Mary's past life, but she endeavoured, of course, to convince her of the corruption of her own heart. Mary listened at first with apparent indifference, and made no reply, except when particularly questioned. When Anna asked if she knew who Jesus Christ was, she said "No, ma'am, I never heard of him."

For some time she was a most discouraging subject. Her extreme deafness required the full pitch of a strong voice to make her hear, and Anna was often interrupted by her complaints. Neither Mary nor her mother could read. The more desperate, however, the case seemed to be, the more was her visitor's energy roused to endeavour to save her. She determined to follow up what she had begun by daily visits, in which she persevered throughout the winter, in spite of all the variations of the weather.

The rock-walk over Waldon hill was at that time a little rough narrow path, strewed with leaves, entangled with stray boughs from the trees, and interrupted, in many parts, by the lodgement of wet and mud. This was Anna's daily walk. She loved its retirement, and was occupied as she went along in prayer. Her little pocket Bible, and a hymn book were her companions. She read the Scripture to Mary, explained and applied it, prayed with her and sang a hymn. By degrees the poor girl seemed interested, and received these visits with evident pleasure. Her manner to her mother improved, and at length she broke her silence by a brief confession of sin, and began to shed tears when the love of Christ was stated to her. Her delight in Anna's visits became manifest, and she looked for the hour of her arrival with eagerness. She never expressed much in words. It was chiefly by such indications that the inward change was manifest. The heart of stone became a heart of flesh. She always seemed particularly

touched when the name of Christ was mentioned, and enjoyed the hymns that Anna sang.

In January, 1817, the visitor was married, and Mary, who lived some months afterwards, said to another friend, "Oh, what would have become of my poor soul? If Miss Anna had not come to me, I should have been lost for ever." She died in the course of that year, quite peaceful and happy, trusting in Christ, and gave directions to her mother concerning her funeral, that two pious young women who had latterly visited her, should be her attendants, and that a particular hymn, which she pointed out, should be sung at her grave.

Another instance of usefulness of this lady's visits to the sick, in a somewhat higher grade, was Richard Carnel, a young midshipman in the navy, residing at Torquay. At the time that Anna M— heard of him, he was in the last stage of a consumption, and destitute of that which alone could support the spirit amid the sinkings of nature. Setting aside every consideration but that of saving a perishing soul, she hastened to visit him, and at first readily gained access to him. Her sympathy for his bodily sufferings, and the kind feeling which brought her to his lodgings, gained her an attentive hearing. But no sooner did she press upon his notice the importance of that eternity to which he was hastening, the value of his soul, the danger of sin, and the need of a Saviour, than a tide of determined opposition to the gospel rose up in his soul. He became "like the deaf adder which stoppeth her ear, and refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer." Anna was not discouraged, she still persevered in her visits; with her Bible in her hand, and the spirit of prayer in her heart, she simply read to him, when he would listen to no arguments or persuasions. The word of God did not return void, but accomplished the gracious purpose for which it was sent.

The Spirit of God accompanied the word, and descended like rain and dew upon the hardened clods, until the hard heart was broken and the rough spirit of opposition bowed before the power of the gospel. He had been angry with the friend who introduced to his home the messenger of the gospel. He was now as anxious to hear the glad tidings as he had before been resolved to resist them. He looked for Anna's visits with pleasure, and when they were over, he longed for their return. Though the outward man perished, the inward man was day by day renewed. The once proud and hardened sinner became a trophy of redeeming grace. Thus was the

child of God made the instrument of adding another jewel to the Saviour's crown, and of turning another sinner to righteousness, who should be her joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Her sister sent to her, after a visit to Torquay a record of another poor woman, who acknowledged Anna M— to have been her first instructor in the way of truth. When asked whether she had any message to Mrs. Clarke, she said, "Give her my—I don't know what to say—and tell her that I am happy; I trust in Christ." About half-an-hour before her death she prayed aloud with great earnestness, and exhorted all around her to look to Jesus. She restrained the fretting of her mother, by exclaiming, "Oh! mother, it is sweet to die." Her last words were, "It will soon be over. You will see a happy death now. It is coming! it is coming!"

THE CLOSE OF DAY.

WELCOME the solemn calm of night,
Day's busy hours are flown!
Freed from the world's delusive light
I turn to God alone.

'Twas at the cool of closing day,
In Eden's blest abode,
That man could once, without dismay,
Hold converse with his God.

But now that sin and sorrow spread
Their withering blight around,
Can fallen man's polluted tread
Approach such hallow'd ground?

Ah! yes, a blood-bought path of peace
Still leads direct to God;
There may the burden'd heart find ease,
Its daily cares unload.

To him who knows and feels my need
I own the sad amount
Of sins in thought, and word, and deed,
That blot this day's account.

Oh, let my conscience sprinkled be
With that all-cleansing blood
That freely now restores to me
The favour of my God!

Thus would I now in Jesus sleep,
Mindful of death's dark night,
Whence those whom he vouchsafes to keep,
Shall wake in glory's light.



THE EIGHT BELLS AND THEIR VOICES

PART II.

It was early on a spring evening that Henry Ekworth and his father took their way towards one of the eastern outskirts of London, and striking out of the main and thronged thoroughfare of the busier streets, they found themselves, after many windings and turnings, and some inquiries, at the place they sought.

This place was a wretched, dirty court, containing about a score of dilapidated dwellings, and hemmed in on all sides by higher buildings which shut out both light and air.

A thick murky gloom hung over the court, and the broken ground beneath their feet was covered with black, slimy mud. The sight was depressing, and the odour was sickening.

DECEMBER, 1855.

M

There was life in that court. Half-naked children, many of them barefoot, and bare-headed, with dishevelled hair, and coated with filth, were playing, screaming, quarrelling, and fighting in the roadway and on the pavements; and men and women, some fierce in aspect, some moody, some dejected, but all dirty and miserably clad, were moving to and fro, or lounging at the open doors and windows of the houses. The men were, most of them, smoking short black pipes; and at the entrance of the court was a gin-palace, which in its gay, flaunting exterior, presented a strong contrast with the neighbouring dwellings. Mr. Ekworth and his son noticed, as they passed by the half-open, swinging double doors of the "palace," that it was thronged with just such looking men and women as seemed to compose the population of the court.

They passed on, and, after some difficulty, found the house of which they were in search.

"Does a person named Halford live here, my little fellow?" asked Mr. Ekworth, of a boy who was sitting on the door-sill. The child was probably eight or nine years of age; but from the precocious cunning of his looks, he might have been an old man. He was disgustingly dirty also, and pale and sallow.

"What will you give me for telling?" he asked, with a sly leer.

"Here is a penny, my poor child," said Mr. Ekworth, compassionately, taking the coin from his pocket. "Now will you tell me what I want to know?"

The child's eyes glistened at sight of the penny, and telling the visitors that, if they went "right up the stairs, as far as they could go," they would find the person for whom they inquired, he ran off with his prize, and Mr. Ekworth with his son slowly and cautiously ascended the dark and broken stairs.

A violent fit of coughing from an apartment just beneath the roof of the house guided Mr. Ekworth to the home of the Halfords; and on gently knocking at the door, it was opened by the wife.

The chamber told of destitution. It was neat, however, and tolerably clean; so was the poor woman, who wept when Mr. Ekworth spoke to her.

"I could not have thought, twenty years ago, sir," said she, when her visitors had entered, and had, with difficulty, been accommodated with seats, "that you would ever come to see my poor husband and me in a place like this."

"What is the use of talking in that way, Susan?" interposed Halford, before Mr. Ekworth could reply, "we are born, but we are not buried yet; and nobody can tell what they may come to before they die."

"We will not speak of what is past, and cannot be recalled," said Mr. Ekworth; "I have called, not so much to bring up painful remembrances, as to see if there be anything in your present circumstances which can be alleviated by such counsel or assistance as I can properly give. Your husband appears to be very ill, Mrs. Halford," he added; it seemed the best way of opening a conversation with the unhappy pair.

Yes, he was very ill, said the poor woman, and had been failing in health a long time; he had, never since they came to live in London, been the man he was before; and now he was fit for nothing. It was a bad thing for them that they ever came to London, she added.

The man again interrupted his wife by asking, in a querulous tone, what occasion there was to talk about that? He came to London, he said, to better his circumstances; and if things had not turned out as he expected, he did not want to be told of it.

Mr. Ekworth once more soothed the evidently perturbed feelings of the irritable invalid; and led the poor wife to speak of their present circumstances, and means of support.

They were very poorly off, she replied to his inquiries; and often had not enough to eat. They should long since have been starved, she added, only that she was able to go out to work, and had got into regular employment in some few families as a charwoman; and this brought in enough to pay the rent of their wretched room, and to supply her husband and herself barely with common necessities; but it was what she had not been used to; and what with hard work, and living in such a bad, unwholesome place, and the constant thought of all her troubles, she felt herself breaking up very fast; and then she and her husband would have to go to the union, she supposed.

"You had two sons and a daughter before you came to London. Are they not living; and is it not in their power to help you?" asked the visitor.

The poor woman shook her head despondingly. Their children were all living, she said; but, she did not know how it was: the boys, as they grew to be men, got into bad ways; one of them went off to sea, and the other was married and had a large family, and was often worse off than themselves.

The girl had married respectably ; but she seldom came near her parents. The poor woman spoke this with evident reluctance.

"She is an unnatural child," said Halford, impatiently ; "and I hope she may find out some day what it is to have one of the same sort herself."

"Don't, John, don't!" remonstrated the wife, in a low voice. "You know that there is a reason—."

Mr. Ekworth hastened to change the subject. He did not wish to learn more of the family history of his old workman. It was not difficult to guess it. The boys, misguided by their father's example, had probably followed in the course which had brought ruin on him and them ; and the daughter, he afterwards discovered, after having borne much suffering and privation, and degradation also, the consequences of her father's evil habit, left home for service, and eventually married. It was true that she did not often visit her parents' miserable home ; but she often, though, for a sufficient reason, unknown to her father, relieved their pressing necessities.

It was some little time before Mr. Ekworth could approach the subject on which he had lightly touched when, earlier in the day, he had unexpectedly fallen in with poor Halford. It was plain that his had been a downward course, that intemperance had ruined him in his circumstances, had ruined his sons too, by evil example, had alienated his daughter and even the wife of his bosom from his affections, and was hastening him to the grave.

Cautiously, at length, the visitor endeavoured to rouse the conscience of the wretched man by speaking of his present position and prospects for eternity. In a low but earnest voice, as he drew himself to the invalid's side, he reminded Halford of the days when he professed to know something of the love of the Saviour, and the power of Divine grace.

"It was all a delusion, all a delusion !" exclaimed the poor man, impatiently.

"I fear it was, indeed," said Mr. Ekworth, sadly ; "but the gracious and omnipotent Saviour—"

"Don't talk about it, Mr. Ekworth," exclaimed the agitated man ; "I told you this morning what my state is ; and there's a voice that says about me, 'He is joined to idols ; let him alone.' I know what the end will be ; you need not tell me about that. Don't talk about religion, sir ; anything but that."

"I must talk about it, my poor friend," said Mr. Ekworth,

in some distress of mind. "I came on purpose to tell you that Jesus is willing, and waiting, and seeking to save the lost; and is able to save to the very uttermost. Think of him, my friend; and the more you think of him, the less reason will you find for despairing of his mercy."

The man wept. "I tell you what it is, Mr. Ekworth," said he, "I have thought about it all, again and again. And I have made resolutions, I cannot tell how often; but it has been of no use. I am like those whom the apostle describes, 'Clouds without water;—trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars,'—you know what follows, Mr. Ekworth." And the man rocked himself in his chair, and groaned deeply.

Once more did the pious visitor speak. "You cannot—you dare not," he said, "surely you dare not give up everything as lost! Think of eternity!—of the blackness of darkness for ever! and then flee to the Strong for strength. You have made resolutions in your own strength; you have not cast yourself on the strong arm and pardoning love of Jehovah; you have not sought the help of his Holy Spirit. You know you have not. I reminded you this morning; I tell you again, that there is One who can subdue your iniquities, and can cast all your sins into the depths of the sea. Go to Him."

"It is of no use," said Halford, impatiently. "There is nothing you can say, sir, that I do not already know; but you do not know how hard my heart is. I know, as well as you can tell me, that I have brought ruin on myself and my poor wife and my family, and am killing myself by inches; and you know as well as I do, how it began, Mr. Ekworth, for you warned me twenty years ago, when you first knew of my goings on at the Eight Bells; but it is of no use. I am just what I have made myself; and you know where it is said, 'He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.'"

It seemed useless to argue with one who, while he knew what the consequences of his sins had been—what the eternal consequences would be, yet loved them too well to relinquish them; and, at length, Mr. Ekworth gave up the contest. "I cannot say more to you, Halford," he said, "but I must pray for you and with you;" and kneeling down, he poured out earnest supplications for the unhappy slave of sin; and then, reminding him of the Saviour's emphatic warning, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having

two hands to go into hell;" he rose to depart. He did not take leave, however, till he had, unobserved as he hoped by the infatuated sinner, placed a small sum in the hands of the poor wife, as she accompanied the visitor to the door; nor until he had promised to call again before leaving London.

It was an exquisitely painful scene; and Henry Ekworth seemed to breathe a freer air when he emerged into the dismal court below.

"I told you, Henry," said Mr. Ekworth to his son, as they walked on towards their lodgings, "that poor Halford's history is another of the voices of the Eight Bells."

A week later, and Mr. Ekworth alone sought the home of the Halfords. He was too late to see the wretched man alive. He had died that morning—the drunkard's death—delirium tremens.

Henry Ekworth had been a year or two in a solicitor's office. His duties sometimes compelled his attendance at the criminal courts. One day, when he entered, a young man stood in the prisoner's dock on trial for robbing his employer. Such trials, alas! are fearfully common; and Henry would have paid but little attention to the proceedings, if, in the youthful prisoner, he had not recognised his old playfellow and schoolfellow, Albert. With a heavy heart he listened then. The trial was short, for the witnesses were few; but the evidence was conclusive; and, without leaving the box, the jury pronounced the prisoner guilty, but recommended him to mercy, because of his youth, and the temptations to which he had been exposed.

Henry Ekworth left the court in great distress of mind; and on the following day he visited the young convict in prison.

"Ah, Henry!" said the unhappy youth, "if I had been brought up as you were, I should not be here now. It is all the fault of my father."

"Do not say that, Albert," said Henry; "it is not, cannot be, right to indulge in such thoughts."

"You would say, I suppose," returned Albert, "that the Bible tells us to honour our fathers and mothers. Well, I have nothing to say about my mother. She is dead; and if she had not been, this would have killed her. But as to honouring my father, I cannot, and will not. And I say that it is his fault that I am here."

Henry was much shocked, and he said so.

"I dare say you are, Henry," replied the young man, "but you need not be so much surprised. I don't say that my father taught me to steal, for he did not; but you know how he came to ruin himself, and all of us. And if he did not teach me to steal, he taught me to drink; and I say it is all his fault; and now I do not care what becomes of me."

Henry thought of the last time he had seen Albert's father, —a prisoner for debt; he knew how true it was that intemperance had been his ruin; he remembered, also, having heard that, when discharged from prison, he had returned to his sinful and ruinous habits; and had sunk into contempt and degradation in the town in which he had once been honoured and envied. He turned the conversation, therefore, from Albert's father to Albert himself.

Yes, it was true enough, said the convicted prisoner, he had robbed his employer. He had pleaded "Not guilty" at the bar, because he was advised to do so, and it was a matter of course to do it; but he was guilty notwithstanding. As to why he did it, it was infatuation, he supposed. He did not want to be dishonest, but the situation was an ill-paid one, and it gave him access to his employer's money. He would have got on well enough, however, if it had not been for one thing; but he had learned to like strong drink from his father's example, and he had learned to smoke cigars, from the example of other young men in his office, and his salary would not afford that. This was all the history and mystery of his present degradation,

This was Albert's story; and as Henry Ekworth heard it, he thought of the Eight Bells and its mournful voices; and this, not the least mournful of them all.

Again and again did Henry visit his unhappy former companion; and in kindly affectionate tones did he strive to lead him to penitence and prayer; to rouse him to hope; and to gird him, not in his own strength—to strong resolutions for time to come.

At length they parted, and have never since met.

These are some of the voices of the Eight Bells, which Henry Ekworth heard; and many more were heard, of which no record has been kept on earth; but which, in other and more enduring records, will tell of shame, poverty, sorrow, guilt, death, and after that the judgment.

J. E. S.

THE OLD YEAR.

"The light of day
Has passed away,
And midnight's hour draws near;
When next the light
Shall break on night
'Twill bring us the new year."

THESE lines were repeated by Edward Lumley on the last evening of December, as he seated himself by the fire-side of his old friend and fellow student, James Myers.

"And I rejoice to think that we shall begin the new year together," answered James. "Such a commencement is, doubtless, an omen that it will prove a happy one."

"How do you know that we shall begin it together?" inquired his friend.

"Know! what a strange question, Lumley! If we live a few hours longer, as is highly probable, we shall do so; and pray observe that in speaking of future events I always have a mental reservation, in case of their not being hindered by any unforeseen contingency, which may save me from a homily on the uncertainty of life, that from your grave looks I fancy you are about to bestow."

"Well, I will spare you my own reflections on the subject, James, provided you will listen to one or two which I shall read from this book," drawing one from his pocket. "I provided myself with it at the railway station to beguile the time as I came along, and parts of it are quite appropriate to the present season."

Mr. Myers consented, and his friend commenced:—"We shall meet by new year's day at furthest. How many, in all ages, have so spoken upon whom no new year's morn ever dawned again! How many who have begun the year in joy and health and hope, who have assured their hearts that it shall be as those that went before it, and even 'more abundant,' have found it a treasury of sorrows and trials, its sunshine overcast with cloud and tempest, its flowers of hope withered and dead, its fairest promises the forerunners of life's heaviest dispensations! Yes, let us pause a little, and think upon the year that is now passing away, ere we rejoice in the prospect of that which is so nigh at hand. Look in upon the homes of your friends, and count the chairs that were drawn around that sanctuary of sweet affections, the evening fireside, on last new year's day. Are any of them now untenanted, standing lonely against the wall? At whose threshold has not

the destroyer stood within these short twelve months? Whose house has he not entered? And then, too, what opportunities have been lost, what blessings unvalued, what monitions unheeded, what lessons of God's own teaching unread! Ah, let us think of all this when we welcome in the new year, and our congratulations shall be tempered with a profound sense of the responsibilities which this recurring cycle of time brings with it. While we are thus employed, time moves silently on, and a new year will soon surprise us. Yet nothing in the material world around us gives warning that another year is completed. Not a click in the mighty machinery by which old Time registers his transits, tells that the great wheel has gone round once again. Ah, how awful is this stealthy pace of Time! a thousand fold more awful than if he entered upon each new stage with a sound or a shock that, like a trumpet blast, would wake us, or, as an earthquake, make us start to our feet."

"This is all said prettily enough, Edward," observed his friend. "There really is something solemn in the close of another year. Have you no comment of your own to make upon it?"

"Only this, James; to say, in the words of the psalmist, to Him in whose sight a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night, 'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' * "

"Edward," said Mr. Myers, "I had heard reports that you were become very grave, very religious—in short, one of 'the over good and rigidly righteous,' and am beginning to think that they were true."

"Supposing that they were, Myers, could I be more good or more righteous than you would wish me to be? Or more so than is required in the word of God from every one who calls himself a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

There was no answer, and Edward continued; "But I am not good, James. 'There is none good but one,' † neither can I fancy myself righteous while I find the word of truth declares that 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,' ‡ nothing better in the sight of Him with whom we have to do."

"You thought all this when last we met, Edward, and, I will acknowledge, proved, in a manner which I have never been able to controvert to my own satisfaction, that a sinner,

* Psa. xc. 12.

† Matt. xix. 17.

‡ Isa. lxiv. 6.

such as we all are, can have no hope of salvation except in the Saviour's merits. Perhaps I was the less strenuous in opposing these opinions, because I did not perceive that they had wrought much change in your character; you were the same, at least nearly the same, pleasant fellow I ever knew you. Of late another story has reached me; I hear that you object to all the innocent amusements of life, and spend your time in promoting the cause of religious societies, visiting the poor, and things of that kind. Is this true, Lumley? for you were one of the last whom I should have expected would have been led away by enthusiasm."

"Before I reply to your question, James, I will ask you one or two. You acknowledge that you are a sinner, and that nothing but the work which the Lord Jesus Christ has performed can save you from everlasting destruction?" His friend assented.—"Now tell me, do you wish, do you hope to be saved?"

"To be sure I do; what an extraordinary question!"

"And do you really think that a mere assent of the understanding to the truth I have referred to—vital though it be—is sufficient?"

"Well, I own I have sometimes thought upon the subject, and that such an idea seemed perfectly irrational; but I am a sorry theologian, Edward, and how was I to settle the matter?"

"By consulting the oracles of God, our only guide on such points. There you will find it written, that 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'* When led by the Holy Spirit to feel that we are condemned sinners, we cast ourselves for deliverance upon Him who is able to save to the uttermost; from the heart believing the Saviour's gracious assurance, 'Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out,'† gratitude and love must give a new direction to our affections and desires, and it will be our anxious wish to serve him in every way that he has required. His own test of the sincerity of our profession is this, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'‡"

"A very natural one," answered Myers; "when we love, we must desire to please."

"Then, my friend, can you wonder that I should desire, however feebly, to please Him 'who loved me and gave himself for me?' Supposing that all you have heard of me were true—I wish it were—and that I could not find time for some

* John iii. 3.

† John vi. 37.

‡ John xiv. 15.

things which the world calls innocent amusements, so much was I engaged in trying to promote His cause, and to relieve the necessities, bodily and spiritual, of my fellow creatures, should I be doing more than is my duty, and ought to be my greatest delight to perform?"

"Edward," his friend replied, after a pause, "you are very solemn this evening. Perhaps you mean it as a requiem for the expiring year; I hope you will hail the birth of the new in a livelier frame."

"I acknowledge," said Edward, "that the return of this season brings with it a peculiar solemnity to me, and will do so as long as I live. Bear with me, James, while I relate a circumstance which occurred at this time of the year, and made it an anniversary not to be forgotten."

"It happened that on the last day of December I had to set out on a journey, the beginning of which was to be performed in a steam-boat. I got on board, and amused myself looking at all the busy faces around me as my fellow passengers came on the deck. With one I was particularly struck; he was a middle-aged man of a gentlemanlike appearance, and had a countenance that seemed radiant with good humour and benevolence. He had a number of small parcels which he was trying to arrange in a safe place, assisted by a friend who had accompanied him to the boat to see him off. 'You will lose half of these parcels if you do not take care,' I heard the friend say. 'That would be a sad catastrophe,' replied the gentleman. 'There is a present for each of the young ones—take care and handle that gently, it is a wax doll for little Susey,—and when I produce them there will be great joy.' 'Stay with me one day longer, and we can have them properly made up,' said his friend. I cannot; I promised Maria and the children to begin the new year with them if it so please God; and I can get home by nine o'clock to night. They will all be on the watch for me.' And he looked as if the mere anticipation of the meeting were a high degree of happiness. The bell of the steamer sounded, the friends shook hands affectionately, and we were off.

"Seated on a sunny part of the deck, wrapped in a warm cloak, I indulged in an imaginary sketch of the pleasant scene which would take place when the person whom I had been observing should reach home. I saw him embrace his wife, whom my fancy depicted as very amiable, while the children of various sizes clustered about him,

'And climbed his knee, the envied kiss to share.'

Then followed the unpapering of the presents, and I almost saw his little Susey's look of delight when the wax doll with its blue eyes and flaxen ringlets met her view. Just then a bustle on another part of the deck dispelled the vision. I asked what was the matter, and was told that one of the passengers had been taken suddenly ill. 'Is there a doctor on board?' some one shouted in a tone of great alarm. There was, and he instantly offered his services. I followed him towards the spot where he was wanted, and saw the gentleman for whom I had felt a great degree of interest, lying on a bench as pale as death. We were all requested by the doctor to keep away from the patient, while he tried such means as were in his power for restoring him. The words 'very bad,' 'worse,' 'heart disease,' 'hopeless,' reached me now and then. After a while the doctor walked towards the place where I was sitting, and I heard the awful news, 'all is over.'

"I could not describe the effect this produced on my mind. Sudden death is ever a startling and solemn event, but under the circumstances which I had just witnessed it was peculiarly affecting. I believe my countenance betrayed my feelings, as the medical man came to me and said, 'Pray sir, do you know anything of this unfortunate gentleman?' 'Nothing,' I replied, 'except that he was a husband and a father, returning home to begin the new year in the bosom of his family who are anxiously expecting him; this I gathered from something I heard him say to a friend as he came on board the boat.' 'Poor fellow, poor fellow! wife and children! Oh, it is very melancholy,' exclaimed the doctor with much feeling. 'To his family and to others it certainly is,' observed an old gentleman who was seated near me.

"While the excitement and anxiety occasioned by our fellow passenger's illness had lasted, I had observed that my venerable companion looked as if he were engaged in prayer; and when the announcement of its mournful termination reached us he grew very pale, and tears moistened his eyes. 'It is melancholy indeed, sir,' he continued, responding to the doctor's lamentation, 'but not to the departed himself if he were a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Quite true, sir,' answered the doctor. 'When death comes, nothing but religion will do. I knew nothing of this poor man, but observed him attend public worship punctually while he remained at the town we have just left. There was a preacher whom all the religious people say is very sound in doctrine; so, poor fellow, I hope he was religious.' 'I hope so too,

most fervently,' the old gentleman replied, 'and I rejoice to hear that he enjoyed an opportunity of hearing gospel truth. In this case it is right and pleasant to believe that he profited by it, and to exercise the charity that hopeth all things. But, my friends, allow me to add, we never should forget that it is necessary to be doers of the word as well as hearers. If this poor man not only knew the truth that maketh wise unto salvation, but had his heart and life influenced by it, and was not an unprofitable servant, he has entered into the joy of his Lord, and is to be envied, not pitied.'

"Oh, Myers, this went to my heart! Had I been thus summoned, what would have been my case? I had been for some time a professing, but had I been a profitable, servant of the Redeemer? These questions allowed me no rest till I devoted myself unreservedly to his service. Nothing less will do, nothing less for peace or safety.

"Help me, my Father, to resign
My every wish, my will to thine;
And I will bless the guiding hand
Which drew my heart from this fair land,
Where all that's lovely fades so fast,
Whose purest pleasures cannot last."

E. F. G.

IT IS TOO LATE.

On the day that Louis Philippe abdicated the throne of France in favour of his grandson, the duchess of Orleans, the mother of the infant prince, entered the Chamber of Deputies, leading him by the hand, that as the heir apparent he might be proclaimed king of the French by the representatives of the nation, in the room of the repudiated monarch. It was an awful moment, big not only with the destinies of the reigning family, but of thirty-five millions of people. All eyes were fixed upon Odillon Barrot, as he rose slowly from his seat, ascended the tribune, and moved that the young count of Paris, then present, be proclaimed king, in the room of his grandfather. Every sound was hushed. Men held their breath. It was as if the heart of an empire had ceased to beat. The question was about to be put, when a single voice from the gallery broke the silence: "It is too late."

Never perhaps did a more thrilling and potent exclamation burst from mortal lips. It smote the ear of the duchess as the death-knell of her house. Great confusion ensued, and she

was glad to escape with her son through one of the back doors of the chamber; it was too late. Had the motion in favour of the heir apparent been made a day or even a few hours earlier, it might have prevailed. But the time was gone by—it was too late. The throne was irrecoverably lost. This is but a single example among a thousand of loss by delay; many a throne has thus been lost.

But our purpose is not to dilate upon examples like these. Those ominous words in the French chamber, *It is too late*, apply to losses continually incurred, which are infinitely greater than those of any dethroned or expectant monarch. The value of a thousand earthly kingdoms bears no proportion to the worth of the human soul. For the soul there is a day of grace, and there is a day of final retribution. While mercy pleads and waits, the sinner may repent and be saved, but by and by, perhaps the next hour, it will be too late. On this point the Bible abounds with examples and illustrations which were “written for our learning,” on whom the ends of the world are come. One of the most striking of these is in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews; “Looking diligently,” warns the apostle, “lest any man fail of the grace of God;—lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears:” it was too late. And as it was too late for Esau, so would it soon be for them if they should come short of the great salvation.

To the same purpose is that awful communication in the first chapter of Proverbs. We have room for only a part of it. “Because I have called, and ye refused.—Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.—They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.” They might have hearkened, they might have been saved; but now it was too late. They had heard and slighted the last call of mercy, and nothing remained to them but a certain fearful looking for of wrath and fiery indignation.

So again in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew we read, “And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.—And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord,

Lord, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." No pleadings now could open the door, it was too late.

We often hear it said, that while life lasts it is never too late for a sinner to repent, and in one sense it is true. If he would truly repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, in the last mortal hour he would be saved. But will he? How small, as we have reason to fear, is the number of such! A man's rejection of Christ may be complete, and thus his day of grace may close, even before he dies. If so, be it a few years or but a few days, it is then too late. And if the truth could be declared in a thousand dying chambers, in how many of them might it be said, These all might have been saved, but it is too late! When God called they refused, and now there is no place for repentance. The rich voluptuary, who had a little before spurned Lazarus from his presence, would have given all his banquets, and purple, and fine linen, for a drop of water to cool his tongue, but it was too late. The horrors of a guilty conscience drove Judas back to the temple, with his thirty pieces of silver, crying, "I have betrayed the innocent blood," but it was too late. The Saviour had said, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born," and he went away in black despair, and hanged himself. Voltaire and Thomas Paine, and other blasphemers, would, some or all of them, have given kingdoms in their last hours for the Christian's hope, but it was too late. They had treasured up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. How many such, according to the most authentic testimony, have gone shuddering out of the world, to meet their final doom!

The king of the Sandwich Islands, who promised the missionaries that in five years he would break off from his debaucheries, and attend to their instructions, died in less than two; and what hope could they have of him? He had fixed his time, but before it half expired he was in eternity; it was too late.

And so it will be with all impenitent hearers of the gospel, who put off their preparation to "a more convenient season," and do not live to see it. They will bewail their foolish procrastination, when it is too late. The young duke of Bordeaux lost only a temporary crown. They will lose that "crown of glory which fadeth not away." Reader, whosoever thou art, yet in thy sins, there is no time to be lost. The arrows of death are flying thick. The young as well as

the old are falling ; if thou dost not repent, a voice from the other world, saying, "It is too late," will ere long seal thine everlasting doom.

N. Y. E.

HEAVENLY MEDICINE.

To Mrs. Wathen, wife of the celebrated oculist to King George III.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Portswood Green, July 26, 1799.

As you kindly engaged my promise to write, I need make no apologies ; you will receive my letter in good part, and I am sure I shall write it with a hearty good will.

But what shall be the subject ; indeed, properly speaking, I have or ought to have but one. This, however, is very comprehensive, I mean Jesus Christ and him crucified. It will at least help to fill up the paper, if I give you some account how I have in general managed it as a minister.

When the Lord, after he had mercifully given me some experimental knowledge of the gospel for myself, was pleased to honour me with a commission to preach to others ; I found myself possessed of an infallible medicine for the cure of all diseases, and I was surrounded with multitudes who, I saw, were sick of a mortal disease, and, as we say, at death's door. I thought at first to do great things with my catholicon—my universal remedy. But I soon observed the fatal disorder I wished to relieve was attended with one very discouraging symptom. Most of the sick people, though I could read death in their countenances, thought themselves well ; they insisted on it that nothing ailed them, and were angry with me because I would not believe them. Some of them could scarcely hear with patience what I said of the power and skill of the Physician who gave me the medicine. Others thought they might apply to him when they were really ill, but at present they had no need of him. Oh, how I laboured with some, but all in vain, to convince them of their danger. Now and then I did prevail with one, who then took the medicine and presently recovered.

And as I and my fellow practitioners were daily praising the virtues and efficacy of our medicine, some of our patients learned to talk after us ; they did not take the medicine, but they praised it. They would allow they had been sick once, but now, to be sure, they must be well, for they could say as much in favour of the medicine as we ourselves. I fear many

died under this mistake. They would not make such a mistake in common life. Many go to see the table spread at a lord mayor's feast, but the sight of the delicacies which they must not taste, will not satisfy the appetite like a plain dinner at home. Alas! our patients were not hungry. Some felt themselves unwell, but would not own it; they tried to look as cheerful as they could. These depended on medicines of their own contrivance; and though they suffered many things and grew worse and worse daily, they refused to try mine. It was judged by one too simple; like Naaman, who for a time, though he would have done some great thing, disdained such an easy remedy as only to "wash and be clean." Others refused, unless I could explain clearly to them all the ingredients belonging to my medicine, which I had neither ability to do, nor they capacity to comprehend. They said likewise that the regimen which I prescribed was too strict; for I told them honestly, that if they did not abstain from some things of which they were very fond, my medicine would do them no good. I was often grieved, though not so much as I ought, to see so many determined to die, rather than take the only medicine that could do them good.

There were more than a few, who deceived both themselves and me, by pretending to take my medicines, who yet did not. None grieved me more than these, but they could not deceive me long. For as the medicine was infallible, I knew that whoever took it, and observed the regimen, would soon show signs of convalescence, and that they were getting better, though they were not perfectly well; and therefore, when these signs were wanting, I was sure the medicine had not been taken.

I have not time to enumerate all the signs that accompany salvation, but I shall mention a few. First, a broken and contrite spirit. This is indispensably necessary, for by nature we are full of pride, and God resisteth the proud, and giveth his grace only to the humble. Secondly, a simple and upright spirit, free from artifice and disguise. It is said of the blessed man, whose sins are forgiven, in his spirit there is no guile. He is open and undisguised. Thirdly, gentle gracious tempers. If a man like a lion takes my medicine, he presently becomes a lamb. He is not easily offended; he is very easily reconciled; he indulges no anger; he harbours no resentment; he lives upon forgiveness himself, and therefore is ready to forgive, if he has aught against any. Fourthly, benevolence, kindness, and an endeavour to please, in opposition to that

selfishness which is our natural character. Fifthly, a spiritual mind which is the beginning of life and peace; a weanedness from the world and its poor toys, and a thirst for communion with God in Christ.

I could go on, but let this suffice. These signs are at first weak, for a Christian is a child before he is a man, but grace grows by exercise, by experience, and by a diligent use of the appointed means. My medicine enlightens the understanding, softens the heart, and gives a realizing of what the Scriptures declare of the glorious person, the wonderful love, the bitter sufferings of the Saviour, and the necessity and efficacy of his death and agonies on the cross. When these things are understood by the teachings of the Holy Spirit (whose influence is always afforded to those that take this medicine), the cure is already begun, all the rest will follow, and the patient recovers apace; though there are sometimes transient relapses, and a spice of the old disorder will hang about them until they are removed to the pure air of a better world.

I hope, my dear madam, this medicine is your food, that you live upon it, and feel the salutary effects of it every day. Oh, what love! that such a Saviour should die for such sinners as we are; and what a marvellous mercy to me, that I should be brought from the horrid wilds of Africa to proclaim his goodness! That I who was an infidel, a blasphemer, and a profligate, should be spared to stand as a proof that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners! You and I are far advanced in years, we know not what a day may bring forth. Perhaps we may never meet on earth, but, oh! may we meet above, to praise Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to partake of that fulness of joy, and to drink of those rivers of pleasure which are at his right hand for evermore.

JOHN NEWTON.

THE MIS-SPENT SABBATH.

“At the close of a mis-spent sabbath, we come and humbly confess our sins before Thee.” Such was the first sentence of my father’s prayer at family worship, one sabbath evening nearly thirty years ago, after an excursion by a canal-boat into the country, which had occupied the whole day. It was the only occasion on which I ever knew him break the sabbath; for his observance of it, except on that one occasion, was uniformly regular and devout. Against his better judg-

ment, however, he had yielded to the importunities of the friends to whom the visit had been paid, and of a relative by whom we were accompanied; with the idea, I have no doubt, that on reaching the place of our destination, he should be in time for public worship. He fulfilled his purpose in that respect, but still conscience was not satisfied. He felt that he had sinned against God, and that he had set an example to his family, as well as to others, which might prove most injurious. At once, then, to seek forgiveness and, as far as possible, to repair the evil which he feared might be done to his household, he made us join in his lowly confession. On rising from his knees he expressed briefly and decidedly his regret on account of the manner in which the day had been spent, and we shortly afterwards retired for the night.

I was then very young, not more perhaps than ten or eleven years of age, but I can scarcely describe the influence which the circumstance exerted on my mind. I felt that it was a manly and noble thing for my father to do, and I do not know that anything he ever did produced in me towards him a feeling of deeper veneration. I had been glad enough to accompany him; but, young as I was, I felt that the confession was a right one, and one in which I ought to join. The impression was indelible; and since, when tempted to desecrate God's day, I have remembered my father's prayer. And I have remembered it when I have seen other parents systematically breaking the sabbath, and have wished that they could see, as he did, the evil they had done, and that acknowledging it in the same spirit they would commit it no more.

The sin—for as such it ought to be regarded—the sin of sabbath desecration is, there is too much reason to fear, largely spreading. Even those who should know much better, and who profess to believe in the sanctity of the day, are not seldom seen, to the grief of their pastors and of all who feel the importance of a right and religious observance of the sabbath, taking their places in the crowded railway train, or otherwise seeking enjoyment in change of society and of scene. They render it, to all intents and purposes, a day of recreation and pleasure, and nothing more. The practice is fraught with evils, to a few of which the writer would affectionately call the attention of those who may have yielded to the temptation thus to mis-spend the day.

And first, it might be asked, is such a mode of spending the day in accordance with the purpose of its institution? Whose day is it? Man's or God's? It is God's. Very

true, it "was made for man," for man's benefit; but then it was never intended that he should exercise his own discretion as to the kind of benefit to be secured from it, or the manner in which that benefit should be sought. Its nature is defined. There is to be rest for the body. All earthly toil is, as far as possible, to be laid aside, and man and beast are alike to rest. But that physical rest which man enjoys in common with the brute is, in his case, only subordinate to a nobler rest—the refreshment and incorporation of the soul by communion with God. It was given that we might have the opportunity of wide extended secret meditation and prayer; that we might assemble with God's people for worship and instruction, and that we might engage in works of loving Christian usefulness.

Admit that much of the stringency of the Jewish mode of keeping the sabbath according to their special laws is gone, these purposes remain as the grand designs of the sabbath. We sin, then, against him who is the Lord of the sabbath, and we set aside the great objects of its establishment when we appropriate it to our own pleasure. It is to a very different observance of it that God accords his approval: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord," etc. Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

It might be asked, again, is it profitable? No doubt there may be, in some cases, the endeavour to blend, as far as possible, religious duty and pleasure; but, even admitting that such has been honestly your purpose, can you recur to such a sabbath, and say it was really a sabbath of true spiritual enjoyment and profit. You awoke in the morning, and your first thought probably was of your sabbath trip, and not of those religious privileges which the day brings with it. You could not leave your room without prayer, conscience would not let you do that: but could you pray with the calm seriousness, and that fixedness of spirit, which prayer especially demands? Did you not feel as though, for that day at least, you had scarcely any right to expect God's blessing, and as though, therefore, you could scarcely ask it? If family prayer were not neglected, was it not felt, that morning at least, to be a formal thing with which you would have gladly dispensed, and was it not a relief when it was over?

You did not find the railway train most favourable to col-

lectedness, and spirituality of mind. Besides the inevitable bustle and excitement of travelling, the society into which you were thrown, and the conversation to which you had to listen, were not specially conducive to devotional thought. You reached your destination with a lurking, if not a strong feeling of self-dissatisfaction. If you attended public worship, you had very little of the true spirit of prayer, and your heart was ill attuned to unite in the praises of the sanctuary. Or, perhaps, you found friends in waiting for you, and, for that day, public worship was neglected that you might enjoy their society.

In any case how large a portion of your time was spent in conversation which was not very profitable; for you felt that conversation of a different kind would hardly have been in keeping with the manner in which you had appropriated the day. Not improbably a part of the day was spent in strolling abroad in the company of your friends. So the sabbath passed, and at length the time came for your return. You reached your home weary and ill at ease, with little disposition to read your Bible, and little disposition to pray, and your conscience told you that it had been a sadly mis-spent sabbath.

And have you thought of the influence likely to be exerted by your mis-spent sabbath on others? Did it ever strike you, if your sabbaths were so mis-spent in visiting friends, "I am not only sacrificing my own sabbath, I am robbing them of theirs?" It is often alleged by persons lacking decision of character as an excuse for absence from public worship, "We had company from a distance, and we could not leave them." You have children perhaps, keen observers always. If you take them with you, you make them partakers of your sin; if you leave them behind, you leave them without the care and instruction which they have a right to expect from you; in either case, there is all the force of an evil example, which they will be only too ready to copy, and which perhaps they may carry out to an extent of which you have little idea, and which may one day cause you bitter sorrow. And besides, you are observed by others of whose observation you may know nothing, but who find in what you thus do a licence and a plea for an habitual neglect of the sabbath. In one word you give countenance, before all the world, to the whole system of sabbath desecration, although to give such countenance may be the very last thing you would desire.

The claims of business, and the necessity for change of air

and scene, will require in the case of most an occasional absence from home, and such absence is exceedingly refreshing; but, wherever we go it should be our fixed resolve that we will not neglect the duties, nor trench on the appropriate enjoyments, of the sabbath. The evil influence of a mis-spent sabbath has often embittered the week; whilst a sabbath well-spent is not only a joy in itself, its light and peace project themselves, so to speak, on the days we have to spend in the bustle and toil of the world. And such a sabbath is the pledge and type of a sabbath which shall never end.

S. G.

A CHRISTIAN MOTHER'S INSTRUCTIONS.

From a Memoir of the late Mrs. A. M. Clarke, published by her Son.

IN order gradually to lead them to pray for themselves, she would take their little hands, when very young, clasp them together, and leaning their arms upon her knees, every morning and evening, put a few simple petitions into their mouths to repeat after her, such as were suited to their age. She made their prayers have special reference to the sins and failings or to the events of the day, ever leading them to a full and free confession of every remembered fault, previous to seeking for pardon; never resting satisfied with merely general petitions, but striving to render them as particular and individual as possible.

She felt deeply herself, and early sought to impress upon their minds the value and privilege of ejaculatory prayer. She pointed out to them the beautiful instance of Nehemiah, when standing as cup-bearer before the king of Persia, lifting up his heart in silent prayer to God for direction. Often did she kneel down with them, and pray for them aloud, especially on Sunday evenings. Sweet and precious were those moments to her children, both at the time, and in the remembrance.

Her instructions in the New Testament, particularly in the Gospels, were most affecting. Often would the tears be drawn forth as she dwelt upon the history of the Saviour's sorrows. She endeavoured to explain to them how their sins, their evil tempers, their falsehood, their disobedience—were the thorns that pierced his brow, the nails that passed through his hands and feet, the spear that entered into his side. Often would she select from her own book of Scriptural references, suitable subjects for their own search, giving them such assistance as might be required. The following illustration of the manner

in which she conducted these lessons may not be uninteresting. It is taken from a manuscript book in which she was accustomed to write down subjects adapted to their understanding, the children writing down at her dictation the subjects and chapters where the references were to be found; it being left to them to find out, and write down the verses.

Wisdom. What is wisdom, Prov. i. 6; Deut. iv. 6. Jesus is wisdom, Prov. viii. 14; 1 Cor. i. 24. Wisdom is of more importance, and more precious than any other thing, Job xxviii. 12—19. Prov. iii. 15; iv. 7: viii. 10, 11. We are intreated to seek wisdom, Prov. i. 20—23; ii. 1—5; iv. 5—7. We are invited to ask wisdom of the Lord, Prov. ii. 6; 1 Kings iii. 11, 12; James i. 5, 6.

The various blessings and advantages which wisdom gives to those who seek, get, and love it. Happiness, Prov. iii. 13—18. Peace and pleasantness, Prov. v. 17. Life, Prov. v. 18. Prosperity, Prov. viii. 18—21. Interest in the love and favour of Christ, Prov. viii. 17, 34, 35. Honour, Prov. iv. 8, 9. Security, Prov. i. 33. Awful warnings to those who despise, Prov. i. 24—32.

Hymns also formed a part of her religious instruction. She was very fond of them herself, and she would sometimes sing them to the children, teaching them to commit them to memory, and to unite their voices with her. Watts' Hymns for Children, and Hymns for Infant Minds, were chiefly her children's store. The Olney collection and Hart's Hymns were for herself. Cowper's Poems she brought before her children, and on one occasion rivetted the attention, and deeply touched the feeling of one of them by reading aloud, "My Mother's Picture." Alas! how soon was the affecting description to become a painful reality.

In her last illness she wrote directions for her children's studies, which after her death were strictly carried out. For her eldest child she wrote a list of subjects, connecting them with Christian motives and practical instruction. She desired that her children should be thoroughly grounded in the knowledge of history, aptly described as "Philosophy teaching by example," most valuable indeed when God in history is made the centre of instruction. All other branches of science entered into her system of education, always with an eye to the great object. In regard to the general management of her family, her first and chief aim was to bring them up on strictly Christian principles, to make the Bible the rule of her conduct, and to show authority from God for all she did.

She combined with firmness the greatest gentleness, and the tenderest love in her dealings with them.

TIME.

TIME is flying, flying, flying,
Oh, how swiftly by!
Like a waterfall that's rushing,
Or a fountain ever gushing—
Hourly, daily, weekly, yearly,
Rapid as the lightning yearly,
Do the moments fly.

Catch the seconds as they're passing,
Wait not for the hours;
Prize them as a golden treasure,
Use them not in trifling pleasure,
Seconds, minutes prizing, holding
As you would those buds unfolding
Into choicest flowers.

Act for some important purpose,
Not with selfish zeal:
See! humanity is bleeding,
Aid thy fellow-man is needing:
Hundreds, thousands, millions—~~hear~~ ^{hear} them,
Breathing out their woes—~~go, cheer~~ ^{go, cheer} them,
Seek their wounds to heal.

Soon another year, all freighted
With the deeds of man,
Will be borne to God their Giver,
And recalled by mortal never!
Oh, be wakeful, watchful, ready,
Heart and hand, to bless the needy;
Thus fill out thy span.

Mrs. A. C. Judson.

HEAVEN.

I LOVE to think of heaven, where I shall meet
My fellow-travellers, and where no more
With grief or sin my mind will be disturb'd;
Where holy saints and holy angels dwell
In constant harmony and mutual love.
But when my heart anticipates the sight
Of God incarnate, wearing on his side,
And hands, and feet, those marks of love Divine
Which he on Calvary for me endured,
All heaven besides is swallowed up in this;
And He who is my hope of heaven below,
Appears the glory of my heaven above.

SWAINE.

